Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Anthropology

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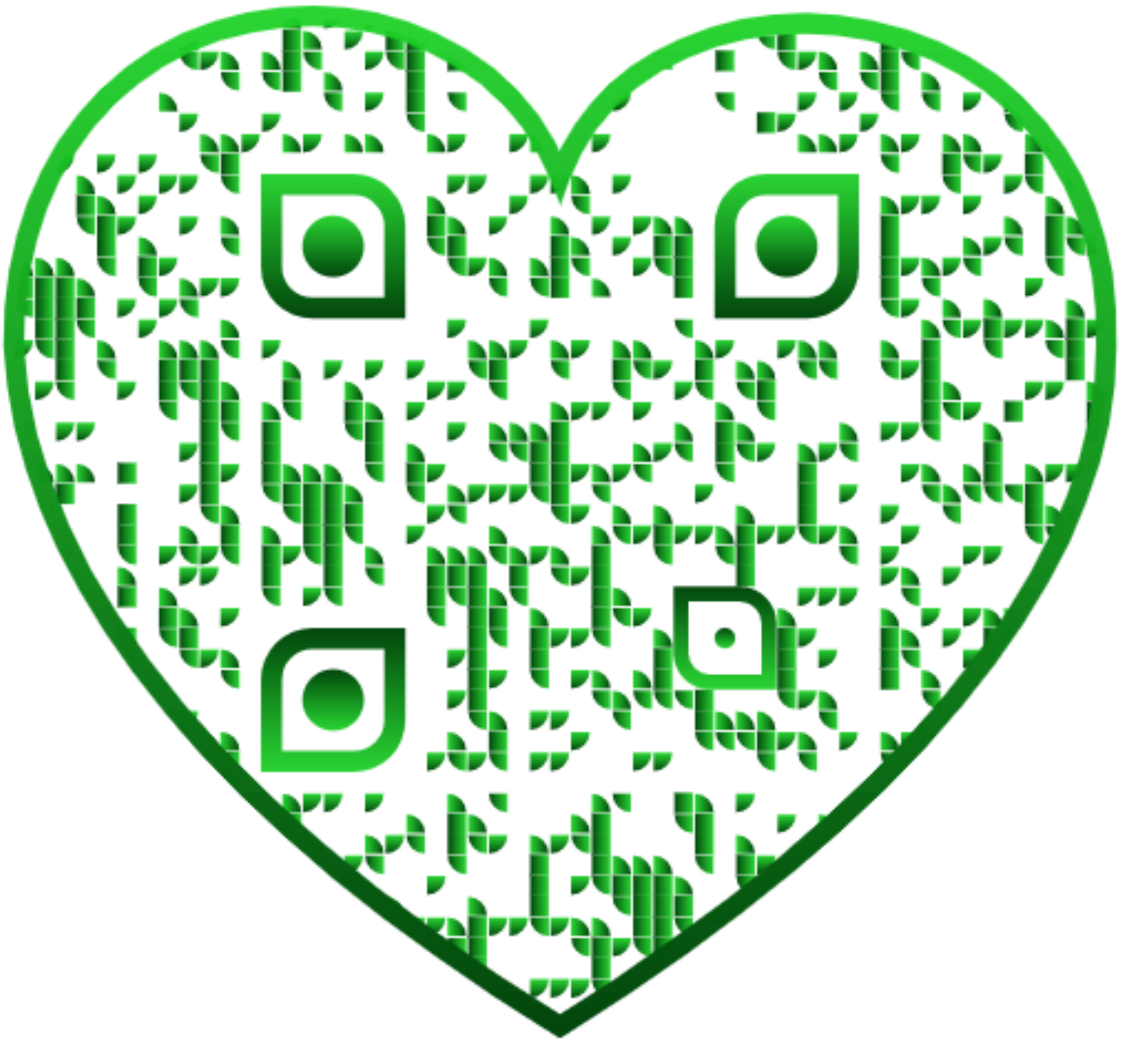

Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Module Title : **Anthropology**

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Anthropology

Course Code: Anth101

Credit Hours: 3

Abbreviations and Acronyms

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation

IK: Indigenous Knowledge

IKS: Indigenous Knowledge system

MoSHE: Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Module Introduction:

Dear Learner! Welcome to this course, Anth101. The course is expected to acquaint you with essential concept of anthropology covering a wide array of questions revolving around our very existence. It cover issues such as what makes human beings similar to each other? How do we differ one another? What do anthropologist mean when they talk about diversity, multiculturalism, marginalization, inclusion and exclusion?

The course will enable learners grasp the different ways of being human by dealing with themes such as culture, kinship, marriage, cultural relativism, ethnocentrism, humanity, human origins, cosmologies, race, ethnicity, ethnic relations, ethnic boundaries, marginalization, minorities, local systems of governance, legal pluralism, indigenous knowledge systems, and indigenous practices and development.

Contents of the module: In addition to the above mentioned themes, this module comprised the following contents: scope of anthropology, braches of anthropology, unique features of anthropology, and research methods in anthropology.

Delivery Methods: The teacher or course facilitator who is assigned to deliver is recommended to make use of different active learning methods including: brainstorming, question and answer, group discussion, buzz-group, cross-over, home-works, reading assignments, peer teaching, and seldom active lecturing.

Modes of Assessment: To assess the progress of student, the instructor/ the course facilitator is expected to employ a continuous assessment technique in the form of quizzes, group and individual assignments, take-home exam, final exam, term paper. The purpose of using various assessment techniques is to improve the process of students' learning.

Module Learning Competencies:

Up on the successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- ✓ Develop an understanding of the nature of anthropology and its broader scope in making sense of humanity in a global perspective;
- ✓ Understand the cultural and biological diversity of humanity and unity in diversity across the world and in Ethiopia;
- ✓ Analyze the problems of ethnocentrism against the backdrop of cultural relativism;
- ✓ Realize the socially constructed nature of identities & social categories such as gender, ethnicity, race and sexuality;
- ✓ Explore the various peoples and cultures of Ethiopia;

- ✓ Understand the social, cultural, political, religious& economic life of different ethno-linguistic & cultural groups of Ethiopia;
- ✓ Understand different forms marginalization and develop skills inclusiveness;
- ✓ Appreciate the customary systems of governance and conflict resolution institutions of the various peoples of Ethiopia;
- ✓ Know about values, norms and cultural practices that maintain society together;
- ✓ Recognize the culture area of peoples of Ethiopia and the forms of interaction developed over time among themselves; and
- ✓ Develop broader views and skills to deal with people from a wide variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Acknowledgments:

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Unit One

1. Introducing Anthropology and its Subject Matter

Study Hours: 4 face-to-face hours

Dear Learners!

Welcome to unit one. This unit deals with anthropology's essence. In this unit, you will be introduced to define concepts crucial for grasping the meaning of anthropology. It also explains anthropology's historical development, scope, subject matter, subfields, unique features and contributions. In due course, students are required to assume active role in class activities and discussions; sharing of experiences, undertake different debates and arguments and take-home assignments.

Contents of the Unit:

The major topics to be treated in this unit include: Definitions, historical developments, scope, and sub-fields of anthropology. It also addresses topics such as misconceptions about anthropology and its relations with different disciplinary fields of study.

Unit learning outcomes:

Up on the successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Define the concepts in Anthropology
- Understand the historical development of anthropology
- Express the scope and subject matter of anthropology
- Explain the sub-disciplines of anthropology
- Internalize unique feature of anthropology
- Convert misconception held about anthropology
- Differentiate anthropology from other discipline
- Appraise the relevance of anthropology in our life

1.1 Definition, Scope and Subject Matter of Anthropology

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- How do you define Anthropology?
- How do you conceive the meaning of the term 'human'?

1.1.1 Concepts in Anthropology

To begin with the etymology of the term, the term anthropology is a compound of two Greek words, '*anthropos*' and '*logos*', which can be translated as 'human being/mankind' and 'reason/study/science', respectively. So, anthropology means 'reason about humans' or 'the study or science of humankind or humanity'. Moreover, man has two important characteristics: biological and cultural: It is very important to understand that the biological and the cultural characteristics are inseparable elements. Culture influences human physical structures and the vise-versa.

Hence, if we take it literally, it is the study of humans. In one sense, this is an accurate description to the extent that anthropology raises a wide variety of questions about the human condition. Yet this literal definition is not particularly illuminating; because a number of other academic disciplines—including sociology, biology, psychology, political science, economics, and history—also study human beings. What is it that distinguishes anthropology from all of these other disciplines? Anthropology is the study of people—their origins, their development, and contemporary variations, wherever and whenever they have been found. It is a broad scientific discipline dedicated to the comparative study of humans as a group, from its first appearance on earth to its present stage of development. Of all the disciplines that study humans, anthropology is by far the broadest in scope.

In more specific terms, anthropology is a science which:

- Investigates the strategies for living that are learned and shared by people as members of human social groups;
- Examines the characteristics that human beings share as members of one species (homo sapiens) and the diverse ways that people live in different environments;

- ☙ Analyses the products of social groups -material objects (material cultures) and non-material creations (religion/beliefs, social values, institutions, practices, etc).

Anthropology is an intellectually challenging, theoretically ambitious subject, which tries to achieve an understanding of culture, society and humanity through detailed studies of community life, supplemented by comparison. At the deepest level, it raises philosophical questions, which it tries to respond to by exploring human lives under different conditions. It seeks to explain how and why people are both similar and different through examination of our biological and cultural past and comparative study of contemporary human societies. Its ultimate goal is to develop an integrated picture of humankind—a goal that encompasses an almost infinite number of questions about all aspects of our existence. We ask, for example, what makes us human? Why do some groups of people tend to be tall and lanky, while others tend to be short and stocky? Why do some groups of people practice agriculture, while others hunt for a living?

As a matter of simplicity and brevity, anthropology primarily offers **two kinds of insight**. **First**, *the discipline produces knowledge about the actual biological and cultural variations in the world*; **second**, *anthropology offers methods and theoretical perspectives* enabling the practitioner to explore, compare, understand and solve these varied expressions of the human condition.

1.1.2 The Historical Development of Anthropology

Like the other social sciences, anthropology is a fairly recent discipline. It was given its present shape during the twentieth century, but it has important forerunners in the historiography, geography, travel writing, philosophy and jurisprudence of earlier times. There are, in any case, many ways of writing the history of anthropology, just as, in any given society, there may exist competing versions of national history or origin myths, promoted by groups or individuals with diverging interests. History is not primarily a product of the past itself, but is rather shaped by the concerns of the present. As these concerns change, past events and persons shift between foreground and background, and will be understood and evaluated in new ways.

If we restrict ourselves to anthropology as a scientific discipline, some would trace its roots back to the European Enlightenment, during the eighteenth century; others would claim

that anthropology did not arise as a science until the 1850s, yet others would argue that anthropological research in its present-day sense only commenced after the First World War. Nor can we avoid such ambiguities.

It is beyond doubt, however, that anthropology, considered as the science of humanity, originated in the region we commonly but inaccurately call 'the West', notably in three or four 'Western' countries: France, Great Britain, the USA and, until the Second World War, Germany(Erikson, 2001). Historically speaking, this is a European discipline, and its practitioners, like those of all European sciences, occasionally like to trace its roots back to the ancient Greeks.

The present academic anthropology has its roots in the works and ideas of the great ancient and Medieval Greek, Roman, and Hebrew philosophers and social thinkers. These people were interested in the nature, origin and destiny of man, and the morality and ethics of human relationships. While the roots of anthropology can be generally traced through the history of western culture as far back as ancient Greek social philosophical thinking, the discipline did not emerge as distinct field of study until the mid-nineteenth century.

Generally speaking, anthropology as an academic discipline was born during the 19th century, out of the intellectual atmosphere of **Enlightenment,** which is the eighteenth century social philosophical movement that emphasized human progress and the poser of reason, and based on **Darwinian Theory of Evolution.** By the late 1870s, anthropology was beginning to emerge as a profession. A major impetus for its growth was the expansion of western colonial powers and their consequent desire to better understand the peoples living under colonial domination.

During its formative years, anthropology became a profession primarily in museums. In this regard, in the 1870s and 1880s many museums devoted to the study of humankind were found in Europe, North America and South America.

Early anthropologists mainly studied small communities in technologically simple societies. Such societies are often called by various names, such as, "traditional", "non-industrialized and/or simple societies". Anthropologists of the early 1900s emphasized the study of social and cultural differences among human groups. Here, many of the indigenous peoples of non-western world and their social and cultural features were studied in detail and

documented. This approach is called **ethnography**. By the mid-1900, however, anthropologists attempted to discover universal human patterns and the common bio-psychological traits that bind all human beings. This approach is called **ethnology**. Ethnology aims at the comparative understanding and analysis of different ethnic groups across time and space.

In Ethiopia, professional anthropologists have been studying culture and society on a more intensive level only since the late 1950s. Almost inevitably, the initial emphasis was on ethnography, the description of specific customs, cultures and ways of life.

1.1.3 Scope and subject matter of anthropology

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What would be the limit to study human beings?
- What specific time period is the subject of its study?
- Where would be the spatial boundary to study human beings?
- Which human characteristic (biological or/and cultural) should be the subject of its inquiry?

The breadth and depth of anthropology is immense. There no time and space left as far as man exists. In other words, the temporal dimension covers the past, the present and even the future. In terms of the spatial dimension, anthropology studies from Arctic to Desert, from Megapolis to hunting gathering areas. The discipline covers all aspects of human ways of life experiences and existence, as humans live in a social group.

It touches all aspect of human conditions as far as there is a relation between human beings and natural environment and man and man. Anthropology not only tries to account for the social and cultural variation in the world, but a crucial part of the anthropological project also consists in conceptualizing and understanding similarities between social systems and human relationships. As one of the foremost anthropologists of the twentieth century, Claude Lévi-Strauss, has expressed it: '***Anthropology has humanity as its object of research, but unlike the other human sciences, it tries to grasp its object through its most diverse manifestations***' (1983, p. 49). In other words, anthropology studies humanity with its all

aspects of existence, and in its all means of differences (diversity) and similarities (commonality). Where every human beinglives, there is always anthropology.

The discipline is also accounting for the interrelationships between different aspects of human existence, and usually anthropologists investigate these interrelationships taking as their point of departure a detailed study of local life in a particular society or a delineated social environment. One may therefore say that anthropology asks large questions, while at the same time it draws its most important insights from small places. Although anthropologists have wide-ranging and frequently highly specialized interests, they all share a common concern in trying to understand both connections *within* societies and connections *between* societies.

Such focus areas of investigation and the stated aims of the discipline convey that, the areas covered by anthropology is diverse and enormous. Anthropologists strive for an understanding of the biological and cultural origins and evolutionary development of the species. They are concerned with all humans, both past and present, as well as their behavior patterns, thought systems, and material possessions. In short, anthropology aims to describe, in the broadest sense, what it means to be human (Peacock, 1986).

1.2 Sub-fields of anthropology

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- Is it possible to study all aspects of human experiences?
- If so, how could we study it?

As discussed in the above headlining, there is no time, space and characteristics left to study human beings. It is so wide as an ocean. Accordingly, it is required to divide and understand in-depth. Accordingly, anthropology has often categorized into ***four majorsubfield***s: *Physical/Biological Anthropology, Archeology, Linguistic Anthropology and Socio-Cultural Anthropology*. Let us explain turn by turn.

1.2.1 Physical/Biological Anthropology

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- In what ways does man differ from other animal species?
- What are the sources of biological variation?
- What differentiate human body from other animals?
- How humans have evolved up to the present time?
- From where did we (human species) come from?
- What is evolution? We hope you remember your high school science lessons on evolution.

Physical anthropology is the branch of anthropology most closely related to the natural sciences, particularly biology; that is why it is often called biological anthropology. Unlike comparative biologists, physical anthropologists study how culture and environment have influenced these two areas of biological evolution and contemporary variations. Human biology affects or even explains some aspects of behavior, society, and culture like marriage patterns, sexual division of labor, gender ideology etc. The features of culture in turn have biological effects like the standards of attractiveness, food preferences, and human sexuality. Biological variations such as morphology/structure, color, and size are reflections of changes in living organism. Since change occurs in the universe, it also applies in human beings.

Human biological variations are the result of the cumulative processes of invisible changes occurring in every fraction of second in human life. These changes have been accumulated and passed through genes. Genes are characteristics that carry biological traits of an organism, including human beings. The major sources of biological variations are derived from the interrelated effects of natural selection, geographical isolation, genetic mutations.

Physical anthropology is essentially concerned with two broad areas of investigation: ***human evolution*** and **genetics.** Human evolution is the study of the gradual processes of simple

forms into more differentiated structures in hominid. It is interested in reconstructing the evolutionary record of the human species using fossils/bones. Human evolution is further divided into three specialties: *Paleoanthropology* and *Primatology.* Palaeoanthropology (*paleo* meaning "old") is the study of human biological evolution through the analysis of fossil remains from prehistoric times to determine the missing link that connect modern human with its biological ancestors. Primatology studies about primates or recent human ancestors to explain human evolution. Primatologists study the anatomy and social behavior of such non-human primate species as gorillas and chimpanzees in an effort to gain clues about our own evolution as a species.

Human genetics concerns to investigate how and why the physical traits of contemporary human populations vary throughout the world. It focuses to examine the genetic materials of an organism such as DNA and RNA. In addition, genetic studies are crucial in understanding –how evolution works and plays important role in identifying the genetic source of some hereditary disease like sickle cell anemia and cystic fibrosis.

1.2.1 Archaeological Anthropology

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What do we mean by the human past?
- Which discipline tells you about the human distance past?
- What do we learn from our past?

Archaeological anthropology or simply archaeology studies the ways of lives of past peoples by excavating and analysing the material culture/physical remains (*artefacts, features* and *eco-facts*) they left behind. **Artefacts** are *material remains made and used by the past peoples* and *that can be removed from the site and taken to the laboratory for further analysis*. Tools, ornaments, arrowheads, coins, and fragments of pottery are examples of artifacts. **Features** are *like artifacts, are made or modified by past people, but they cannot be readily carried away from the site*. Archaeological features include such things as house foundations, ancient buildings, fireplaces, steles, and postholes. **Eco-facts** are *non-artefactual, organic and environmental remains* such as soil, animal bones, and plant

remainsthat were not made or altered by humans; but were used by them. Eco-facts provide archaeologists with important data concerning the environment and how people used natural resources in the past.

Archaeology has also its own subfields or areas of specialties. The most important ones are - *Prehistoric Archaeology* and *Historical Archaeology*. Prehistoric archaeology investigates human prehistory and prehistoric cultures. It focuses on entire period between 6,000 years ago and the time of the first stone tools (the first artifacts), around 2.5 million years ago, is called *prehistory*. Historic archaeologists help to reconstruct the cultures of people who used writing and about whom historical documents have been written. Historic archaeology takes advantage of the fact that about 6,000 years ago, some human groups invented language and began to write down things that can tell about the past.

We Ethiopian have very glorious past. Area logical findings in North, south, east and western part of the country have shown our county belonged to those countries which have old civilization.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- Discuss the lesson we get by studying our past?
- Have you ever visited any museums in your area?
- What kind of archaeological evidences are commonly found in your area?
- From your observation, which evidences are similar and different to those of communities/ groups aroundyour nearby community?
- Why do you think is such differences and similarities happening?

1.2.3 Linguistic Anthropology

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- Do you speak a language other than your mother tongue? If yes, what's the similarity& difference between the languages?
- What is the difference between human communication and any other animal communication?
- What distinguishes human communication from any other animal communication?
- What do languages functions?

Indeed, linguistic anthropology or anthropological linguistics studies human language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice in its social and cultural context, across space and time. *Language* is basically a system of information transmission and reception. Humans communicate messages by sound (speech), by gesture (body language), and in other visual ways such as writing. Analogous to genes that carry and transmit genetic materials to offspring, languages hand down cultural traits from one generation to another. In fact, some would argue that language is the most distinctive feature of being human. Although animals could develop certain behaviors through conditioning that mimic to humans, they do not have a capacity to pass on their own offspring. This is the boundary between human beings and other animals including higher primates.

Linguistic anthropology, which studies contemporary human languages as well as those of the past, is divided into four distinct branches or areas of research: *Structural or Descriptive Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, Ethno-Linguistics,* and *Socio-linguistics*.

Structural /Descriptive **Linguistics: -**studies the structure of linguistic patterns. It examines sound systems, grammatical systems, and the meanings attached to words in specific languages to understand the structure and set of rules of given language. Every culture has a distinctive language with its own logical structure and set of rules for putting words and sounds together for the purpose of communicating. In its simplest form, the task of the

descriptive linguist is to compile dictionaries and grammar books for previously unwritten languages. For structuralist linguist or structural linguistic anthropologist, even if there are thousands of human languages, at least structurally all of them are similar making it possible for everyone of us to grasp and learn languages other than our so called 'mother tongue'.

Ethno-linguistics (*cultural linguistics):* examines the relationship between language and culture. In any language, certain cultural aspects that are emphasized (such as types of snow among the Inuit, cows among the pastoral Maasai, or automobiles in U.S. culture) are reflected in the vocabulary. Moreover, cultural linguists explore how different linguistic categories can affect how people categorize their experiences, how they think, and how they perceive the world around them.

Historical linguistics: - deals with the emergence of language in general and how specific languages have diverged over time. It focuses on the comparison and classifications of different languages to differentiate the historical links between them.

Socio-linguistics: -investigates linguistic variation within a given language. No language is a homogeneous system in which everyone speaks just like everyone else. One reason for variation is geography, as in regional dialects and accents. Linguistic variation also is expressed in the bilingualism of ethnic groups.

Linguistic anthropology generally focuses on the evolution of languages. It tries to understand languages variation in their structures, units, and grammatical formations. It gives special attention to the study of unwritten languages. Language is a key to explore a culture.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What is relation between language and culture, and human thought patterns?
- Do you think that your language changes? If so, what makes language change?
- Would change in language brings any change on our identity?

- Can we maintain our identity in state of global changes?
- How can we keep our identity in state of global changes?
- How does language construct identity, ideology, and narratives?

1.2.4 Socio-Cultural Anthropology

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What is society and culture?
- What differentiate human society from other animal society such as bees, ants, etc?
- How can we study cultures?

It is also often called social anthropology or cultural anthropology. Socio-cultural anthropology is the largest sub-fields of anthropology. It deals with human society and culture. Society is the group of people who have similar ways of life, but culture is a way of life of a group of people. Society and culture are two sides of the same coin. Socio-cultural anthropology describes, analyzes, interprets, and explains social, cultural and material life of contemporary human societies. It studies the social (human relations), symbolic or nonmaterial (religious, language, and any other symbols) and material (all man-made objects) lives of living peoples.

Socio-cultural anthropologists engage in two aspects of study: *Ethnography* (based on field work) and *Ethnology* (based on cross-cultural comparison). **Ethnography** provides a comprehensive account of a particular community, society, or culture. It describes the features of specific cultures in as much detail as possible including local behavior, beliefs, customs, social life, economic activities, politics, and religion. These detailed descriptions (ethnographies) are the result of extensive field studies (usually a year or two, in duration) in which the anthropologist observes, talks to, and lives with the people he or she is studying. During ethnographic fieldwork, the anthropologist (ethnographer) gathers data

that he or she organizes, describes, analyzes, and interprets to build and present that account, which may be in the form of a book, article, or film.

Ethnology is the comparative study of contemporary cultures and societies, wherever they may be found. It examines, interprets, analyzes, and compares the results of ethnography the data gathered in different societies. It uses such data to compare and contrast and to make generalizations about society and culture. In other words, Ethnologists seek to understand both why people today and in the recent past differ in terms of ideas and behavior patterns and what all cultures in the world have in common with one another. Looking beyond the particular to the more general, ethnologists attempt to identify and explain cultural differences and similarities, to test hypotheses, and to build theory to enhance our understanding of how social and cultural systems work. Indeed, the primary objective of ethnology is to uncover general cultural principles, the "rules" that govern human behavior.

Ethnography	**Ethnology**
Requires field work to collect data	Uses data collected by a series of researchers
Often descriptive	Usually synthetic
Group/community specific	Comparative/cross-cultural

Socio-cultural anthropology uses ethnographical and ethnological approaches to answer all sort of questions related to culture and human societies. To properly address emerging questions related to culture and societies, it has been sub-divided into many other specialized fields as: Anthropology of Art, Medical Anthropology, Urban Anthropology, Economic Anthropology, Political Anthropology, Development Anthropology, Anthropology of Religion, Demographic Anthropology, Ecological Anthropology, Psychological Anthropology, Ethnomusicology, etc. All of them are considered to be the applied areas of anthropology.

Reflect your views on the following questions

- From your life experiences, which sub-specialization of social-cultural anthropology could solve your community problems?
- How did humankind arrive at the present stage of biological, intellectual, and cultural development?
- How are different people in different places similar and different, both biologically and culturally/behaviorally?
- Is there a common human nature, and if so, what is it like?
- How can we explain why cultures vary?

1.3 Unique (Basic) Features of Anthropology

Reflect your views on the following question.

- What makes anthropology unique?

Several distinguishing characteristics that identify anthropology from other discipline. Anthropology is unique in its scope, approach, focus and method of study. Anthropology has a **broad scope**. It is interested in all human beings, whether contemporary or past, ''primitive'' or '' civilized'' and that they are interested in many different aspects of humans, including their phenotypic characteristics, family lives, marriages, political systems, economic lives, technology, belief, health care systems, personality types, and languages. No place or time is too remote to escape the anthropologist's notice. No dimension of human kind, from genes to art styles, is outside the anthropologist's attention. Indeed, Anthropology is the broad study of human kind, around the world and throughout time.

The second important feature is its **approach.** In its approach anthropology is *holistic*, *relativistic*, and *focused* one. Holistic in a sense that it looks any phenomena from different

vantage points. Accordingly, anthropology considers culture, history, language and biology essential to a complete understanding of society. Anthropology seeks to understand human beings as whole organisms who adapt to their environments through a complex interaction of biology and culture. The concept of relativity is highly appreciated in anthological studies. Anthropology tries to study and explain a certain belief, practice or institution of a group of people in its own context. It does not make value judgment, i.e., declaring that this belief or practice is 'good' or 'bad'. **Anthropology's comparative** perspective helps to understand differences and similarities across time and place. Another important perspective is a way of looking at people's ideas. It considers**insiders' views** as a primary focus of any anthropological inquiry. Anthropological studies give attention to how people perceive themselves and understand their world; how a particular group of people explain about their action, or give meaning to their behaviour or cultural practices. This is what anthropologists call **emic** perspective. It helps to understand the logic and justification behind group behavior and cultural practices.

Another important unique feature is its **research** approach. Anthropology is highly dependent on qualitative research to understand the **meaning** behind any human activity. Extended fieldwork, participant observation, in-depth and key informant interviews and focus-group discussion are qualitative research instruments to explore information change and continuities in human societies. Ethnographic fieldwork is an important strategy is normally required to spend a year or more with research subjects and document realities occurring across time. For most anthropologists, fieldwork is a process requiring them to '***tune-in; hangout; and hang-on'*** to the societies and cultures whom they are interested to study.

Focusing more on the **local than the big social processes** has been another exclusive approach in the discipline. Paying great attention to local or micro-social processes certainly help us to better understand big changes in societies. A detailed account of an event or phenomenon discovers multiple realities in a community.

1.4 Misconceptions about anthropology

Reflect your views on the following question.

- What did you hear/read about anthropology, anthropologists and the work they do?

Due to lack of appropriate awareness about the nature, scope and subject matter of the discipline, different misconceptions are held about anthropology.

One misconception about anthropology is related to the area of its study. It is said that anthropology is limited to the study of "primitive" societies. Indeed, most of the works done by anthropologists during early periods focused on isolated, so called "primitive", small scale societies. However, anthropologists nowadays study most advanced and most complex societies as well.

Another misconception is that anthropologists only study the rural people and rural areas. As a matter of fact, most of the studies conducted during the formative years (when it undergone a process of development to be developed as a separate fields of study) of the discipline focused on rural areas. But now, anthropologists are also interested in the study of urban people and urban areas. There is a distinct sub-discipline devoted to the study of urban societies called -***Urban Anthropology***-which focuses on urban areas and in complex cities.

It is also wrongly misconceived that anthropology is the study/analysis of fossil evidences of the proto-humans like that of ***Lucy/Dinkeneshe***. It is true that anthropology is interested in the question of the origin of modern human beings. However, this doesn't mean that anthropology is all about the study of human evolution. It studies both the biological and the cultural aspects of humans and examines the existing human physical and biological variations and cultural diversity.

It is also misconceived that the purpose of anthropology is to study in order to keep and preserve communities far from development and obsolete cultural practices in museums. Rather, anthropologists' duties are to support those communities' capacity to empower themselves in development processes. They assist peoples' initiatives instead of imposed

policies and ideas coming from outside and play active roles in bringing about positive change and development in their own lives.

1.5 The Relationship between Anthropology and Other Disciplines

Reflect your views on the following question.

- How do you think relations between and among different scientific disciplines be expressed?
- What do you think is the relationship between anthropology and another social scientific discipline?

Anthropology is similar with other social sciences such as sociology, psychology, political sciences, economics, history, etc. Anthropology greatly overlaps with these disciplines that study human society. However, anthropology differs from other social sciences and the humanities by its ***broad scope, unique approach, perspective, unit of analysis*** and ***methods used***. In its **scope**, anthropology studies humankind in its entirety. In its **approach**, anthropology studies and analyzes human ways of *life holistically, comparatively* and in a *relativistic manner*. In its **perspective**, according to Richard Wilk, anthropology approaches and locates dimensions of people's individual and communal lived experiences, their thoughts and their feelings in terms of how these dimensions are interconnected and interrelated to one another, yet not necessarily constrained or very orderly, whole. The perspective is also fundamentally ***empirical, naturalistic*** and ***ideographic*** [particularising] than ***nomothetic*** [universalising] one. In its **method of research**, it is unique in that it undertakes *extended fieldwork* among the studied community and develops intimate knowledge of the life and social worlds of its study group/society through employing those ethnographic data collection techniques such as participant observation, Key informant interview and focus group discussions.

1.6 The Contributions of anthropology

Reflect your views on the following question.

- Being introduced to the general subject matter of anthropology and the approaches and perspectives it adheres, on what different ways could you be benefitted from learning anthropology as a common course?

The philosophical underpinning is that since we are human beings, we have to know our civilization. Anthropology has established for itself the task of examining all aspects of humanity for all periods of time and for all parts of the globe. Because of the enormity of this task, anthropologists must draw on theories and data from a number of other disciplines in the humanities, the social sciences, and the physical sciences. Accordingly, its contributions are immense. By studying anthropology, we get the following benefits, among others.

First, the anthropological perspective, with its emphasis on the comparative study of cultures, should lead us to the conclusion that our culture is just one way of life among many found in the world and that it represents one way (among many possible ways) to adapt to a particular set of environmental conditions. Through the process of contrasting and comparing, we gain a fuller understanding of other cultures and our own.

Anthropology also helps us better understand ourselves or our own ways of life. As a mirror of human life, by studying others, we can better understand ourselves. Hence, it gives opportunity to understand and to be critical about the ways of lives of our own community.

Second, anthropology gives us an insight into different ways and modes of life of human society (social and cultural diversity), which helps to understand the logic and justification behind group behavior and cultural practices. Knowledge about the rest of the world is particularly important today because the world has become increasingly interconnected. So, today it is important that we not only know something about other peoples of the world, but also grasp how our everyday decisions are influencing them in a multitude of ways and how others' decisions are also influencing ours.

Through its distinctive methodology of long-term, intensive, participant-observation research, cultural anthropology offers a unique perspective on how local cultural groups are

engaging with the process of globalization. Although many pundits discuss the consequences of globalization by talking to only government and business leaders, cultural anthropologists are more likely to see what is actually occurring on the ground and how the local people themselves talk about their life experiences in a time of rapid globalization.

Because of its *relativistic approach*, anthropology helps us to be more sensitive to and appreciative of cultural diversity and variability. It helps us to avoid some of the misunderstandings that commonly arise when individuals of different cultural traditions come into contact. Anthropology helps us fight against prejudice and discriminations. It helps us fight against **ethnocentrism;** the belief that one's own culture and one's own way of life is superior to others cultural, social and material life. This arises from ignorance about other ethnic groups and their ways of lives.

Anthropology is also used as a tool for development. Paying attention to local conditions, is crucial to solve community problems. The application of anthropological knowledge and research results have become important element to ensure people's rights in development and able to sustain projects' life. Anthropologists are better equipped with the knowledge, skills and methods of identifying the needs and interests of local people for the betterment and change of their lived experiences. It recognizes the advantages of consulting local people to design a culturally appropriate and socially sensitive change, and protect local people from harmful policies and projects that threaten them. In general, anthropology is able to suggest sound solutions to all things human.For example, it is often applied in areas of *Environmental Change, Health and Nutrition, Globalization, Social Justice and Human Rights, cultural resource management* (CRM) *and Cultural Dimensions of Civil and Religious Conflicts.*

1.7. Unit Summary

Dear Students!

In this unit we have explored in a more general way the nature of anthropology as a field of inquiry. We have also seen the four common sub divisions of anthropology: physical/biological anthropology; archaeology; linguistic anthropology; and socio-cultural anthropology with their main essences and divisions. It's also underscored that the

discipline, at least in its modern form, emerged in late 19th c. Europe as the science of human beings across broader spaces and times of existence. Ideally anthropologists want to know how all the aspects and elements of people's lives are related and interconnected via carrying out extended fieldwork to collect empirical data from communities while they are in their natural setting and trying to understand the meanings people attached to events, phenomena and their ways of life. It is important to understand that there are few misconceptions about the nature, purpose and historical emergence of the discipline most ultimately based on ignorance and misundersding of historical facts. However, anthropology has successfully contributed the significance of local lives and local voices in an age of simmering waves of global forces.

1.8. Assessment Techniques

The assessment methods to be used in this unit include; quiz, group assignment, individual assignments, administering different examinations and mandatory reading assignments.

1.9 Facilities required

White/Blackboard, LCD/Power Point Presentations, Whiteboard Markers…. etc.

Suggested reading materials

Eriksen, Thomas H. 2001. Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology. 2th ed. London: Pluto Press.

Kottak, Conrad P. 2007. Mirror for humanity: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology. 5th ed. New York: McGraw- Hill.

Kottak, Conrad Phillip. 2010. *Window on humanity: a concise introduction to anthropology.* 4thEd. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Smith, Cameron M. and Davies, Evan T. 2008. Anthropology for Dummies®. Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing Inc.

Unit Two

2. Human Culture and Ties that Connect

Study Hours: 8 face-to-face hours

Dear Learners!

Welcome to unit two. This unit examines the anthropological concept of culture and helps students to increase their understanding the role and impact of culture in human life. Therefore, this unit considers, the distinct qualities/characteristics features human cultures have; it explores the key components of culture that govern human behavior, explains cultural traits which are considered universals, generalities, and particularities, the idea of ethnocentrism, cultural relativism and universal human rights, the changing nature culture. Finally, this section deals with marriage, family and kinship.

In due course, students are required to assume active role in class activities and discussions; sharing of experiences, undertake different debates and arguments and take-home assignments.

Contents of the Unit:

The major topics to be treated in this unit include: The nature, meaning, aspects and elements of the central and prominent anthropological concept called culture as both a defining and differentiating aspect of societies. Concepts such as family, marriage and kinship with some of their manifestations, classifications and dimensions are discussed herein under this unit.

Unit learning outcomes:

Up on the successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the meaning, characteristics, and functions of culture
- Explain aspects of culture that govern human behavior patter
- Develop and understanding of accepting and respecting cultural differences
- Describe the mechanisms to culture change

- Understand the basic building blocks of human society - marriage, family, and kinship system

2.1. Conceptualizing Culture: What Culture is and What Culture isn't

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- How do you define culture?
- What do you think are the tributes of culture?
- Do you think culture differentiates human being from other animals?

Definition of Culture

The term culture is not used with consistent meanings. It is used with various meanings in common-sense. Anthropologists and sociologists define culture in different ways. Some of their definition have been quoted below:

- A widely accepted and the more comprehensive definition of culture was provided by the British anthropologist Edward B. Tylor. He defined culture as "*a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society*".
- B. Malinowski has defined culture "as cumulative creation of man". He regarded culture as the handiwork of man and the medium through which he achieves his ends.
- Robert Bierstedt says, "Culture is the complex whole that consists of everything we think and do and have as members of society."

Combining several of these definitions, we may define culture as the common way of life shared by a group of people. It includes all things beyond nature and biology.

Culture therefore, is moral, intellectual and spiritual discipline for advancement, in accordance with the norms and values based on accumulated heritage. Culture is a system of learned behavior shared by and transmitted among the members of the group.

Culture is a collective heritage learned by individuals and passed from one generation to another. The individual receives culture as part of social heritage and in turn, may reshape the culture and introduce changes which then become part of the heritage of succeeding generations.

2.2 Characteristic Features of Culture

Dear students, for the better understanding the concept of culture, it is necessary for us to know its main features.

1. **Culture Is Learned:**

Culture is not transmitted genetically rather; it is acquired through the process of learning or interacting with one's environment. More than any other species human relies for their survival on behavior patterns that are learned. Human have no instinct, which genetically programmed to direct to behave in a particular way. This process of acquiring culture after we born is called **enculturation**. **Enculturation** is specifically defined as the process by which an individual learns the rules and values of one's culture.

2. **Culture Is Shared**:

For a thing, idea, or behavior pattern to qualify as being "cultural" it must have a shared meaning by at least two people within a society. In order for a society to operate effectively, the guidelines must be shared by its members. Without shared culture members of a society would be unable to communicate and cooperates and confusion and disorder world result.

3. **Culture Is Symbolic:**

Symbolic thought is unique and crucial to humans and to cultural learning. A symbol is something verbal or nonverbal, within a particular language or culture that comes to stand for something else.There need be no obvious, natural, or necessary connection between the symbol and what it symbolizes.

A symbol's meaning is not always obvious. However, many symbols are powerful and often trigger behaviors or emotional states. For example, the designs and colors of the flags of different countries represent symbolic associations with abstract ideas and concepts.

4. **Culture Is All-Encompassing**

Culture encompasses all aspects, which affect people in their everyday lives. Culture comprises countless material and non-material aspects of human lives. Thus, when we talk about a particular people's culture, we are referring to all of its man- made objects, ideas, activities whether those of traditional, old time things of the past or those created lately. Culture is the sum total of human creation: intellectual, technical, artistic, physical, and moral; it is the complex pattern of living that directs human social life, and which each new generation must learn and to which they eventually add with the dynamics of the social world and the changing environmental conditions.

5. **Culture Is Integrated:**

Cultures are not haphazard collections of customs and beliefs. Instead, culture should be thought as of integrated wholes, the parts of which, to some degree, are interconnected with one another. When we view cultures as integrated systems, we can begin to see how particular culture traits fit into the whole system and, consequently, how they tend to make sense within that context.

A culture is a system, change in one aspect will likely generate changes in other aspects. A good way of describing this integrated nature of culture is by using the analogy between a culture and a living organism. The physical human body comprises a number of systems, all functioning to maintain the overall health of the organisms, including among others, such system as the respiratory system, the digestive system, the skeletal system, excretory system, the reproductive system, and lymphatic system.

6. **Culture Can Be Adaptive and Maladaptive:**

Humans have both biological and cultural ways of coping with environmental stresses. Besides our biological means of adaptation, we also use "cultural adaptive kits," which contain customary activities and tools that aid us.

People adapt themselves to the environment using culture. The ability to adapt themselves to practically any ecological condition, unlike other animals, makes humans unique. Culture has allowed the global human population to grow from less than 10 million people shortly

after the end of the last ice age to more than 7 billion people today, a mere 10,000 years later. This ability is attributed to human's capacity for creating and using culture.

Sometimes, adaptive behaviour that offers short-term benefits to particular subgroups or individuals may harm the environment and threaten the group's long-term survival. Example: Automobiles permit us to make a living by getting us from home to workplace. But the by-products of such "beneficial" technology often create new problems. Chemical emissions increase air pollution, deplete the ozone layer, and contribute to global warming. Many cultural patterns such as overconsumption and pollution appear to be maladaptive in the long run.

7. **Culture Is Dynamic:**

There are no cultures that remain completely static year after year. Culture is changing constantly as new ideas and new techniques are added as time passes modifying or changing the old ways. This is the characteristics of culture that stems from the culture's cumulative quality.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- How is culture learned?
- What do we mean by culture is adaptive and maladaptive?

2.3 Aspects/Elements of Culture

Reflect your views on the following activity

- Write dawn any items/activities that show your culture. Then differentiate which one is material and non-material culture.

Culture is reflected through the various components that it comprises, viz., values, language, myths, customs, rituals and laws. Two of the most basic aspects of culture are material and nonmaterial culture. These are briefly explained as follows:

2.3.1 Material culture

Material culture consist of man-made objects such as tools, implements, furniture, automobiles, buildings, dams, roads, bridges, and in fact, the physical substance which has been changed and used by man. It is concerned with the external, mechanical and utilitarian objects. It includes technical and material equipment. It is referred to as civilization.

2.3.2 Non – Material culture

The term 'culture' when used in the ordinary sense, means 'non-material culture'. It is something internal and intrinsically valuable, reflects the inward nature of man. Non-material culture consists of the words the people use or the language they speak, the beliefs they hold, values and virtues they cherish, habits they follow, rituals and practices that they do and the ceremonies they observe. It also includes our customs and tastes, attitudes and outlook, in brief, our ways of acting, feeling and thinking. Some of the aspects of non-material culture listed as follows:

Values:

Values are the standards by which member of a society define what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly. Every society develops both values and expectations regarding the right way to reflect them.

Values are a central aspect of the nonmaterial culture of a society and are important because they influence the behavior of the members of a society.

Beliefs

Beliefs are cultural conventions that concern true or false assumptions, specific descriptions of the nature of the universe and humanity's place in it. Values are generalized notions of what is good and bad; beliefs are more specific and, in form at least, have more content. "Education is good" is a fundamental value in American society, whereas "Grading is the

best way to evaluate students" is a belief that reflects assumptions about the most appropriate way to determine educational achievement.

Norms

Norms are another aspect of nonmaterial culture. Norms are shared rules or guidelines that define how people "ought" to behave under certain circumstances. Norms are generally connected to the values, beliefs, and ideologies of a society.

Norms vary in terms of their importance to a culture, these are:

a) **Folkway**: Norms guiding ordinary usages and conventions of everyday life are known as folkways. Folkways are norms that are not strictly enforced, such as not leaving your seat for an elderly people inside a bus/taxi. They may result in a person getting a bad look.

b) **Mores**: Mores (pronounced MOR-ays) are much stronger norms than are folkways. Mores are norms that are believed to be essential to core values and we insist on conformity. A person who steals, rapes, and kills has violated some of society's most important mores.

People who violate mores are usually severely punished, although punishment for the violation of mores varies from society to society. It may take the form of ostracism, vicious gossip, public ridicule, exile, loss of one's job, physical beating, imprisonment, commitment to a mental asylum, or even execution

2.4 Cultural Unity and Variations: Universality, Generality and Particularity of Culture

In studying human diversity in time and space, anthropologists distinguish among the universal, the generalized, and the particular.

Certain biological, psychological, social, and cultural features are universal (found in every culture), others are merely generalities (common to several but not all human groups), other traits are particularities (unique to certain cultural traditions).

1) **Universality:**

Universals are cultural traits that span across all cultures. Most are biologically that distinguish us from other species – Long period of infant dependency – Year-round sexuality – Complex brain that enables use of symbols, languages, and tools Social universals – Life in groups – Some kind of family – Culture organizes on social life Depends on social interactions for expression and continuation – Incest taboo – Exogamy (marriage outside one's group).

A great example of universality is that whether in Africa or Asia, Australia, or Antarctica, people understand the universal concept of family. Anthropologists would argue that it's just what we as humans do - we organize ourselves into families that are based on biology. No matter where you choose to travel and explore, you'll find a family system.

2) **Generality:**

Generalities are cultural traits that occur in many societies but not all of them. Societies can share same beliefs and customs because of borrowing Domination (colonial rule) when customs and procedures are imposed on one culture can also cause generality Independent innovation of same cultural trait – Farming Examples: – Nuclear family Parents and children.

3) **Particularity:**

Trait of a culture that is not widespread Cultural borrowing – traits once limited are more widespread Useful traits that don't clash with current culture get borrowed Examples: – Food dishes Particularities are becoming rarer in some ways but also becoming more obvious Borrowed cultural traits are modified Marriage, parenthood, death, puberty, birth all celebrated differently.

2.5. Evaluating Cultural Differences: Ethnocentrism, Cultural Relativism and Human Rights

The concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism occupy key position in anthropology.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- Since your arrival to your college you have observed any events/activities. Would you please list dawn specific cultural differences you observed between university and home? Justify to your group member. Which event do you like and which one you don't like? Why?

A. ETHNOCENTRISM:

The common response in all societies to other cultures is to judge them in terms of the values and customs of their own familiar culture. Ethnocentrism refers to the tendency to see the behaviors, beliefs, values, and norms of one's own group as the only right way of living and to judge others by those standards.

Being fond of your own way of life and condescending or even hostile toward other cultures is normal for all people. Because of ethnocentrism, we often operate on the premise that our own society's ways are the correct, normal, better ways, for acting, thinking, feeling and behaving. Our own group is the centre or axis of everything, and we scale and rate all others with reference to it. Ethnocentrism is not characteristic only of complex modern societies. People in small, relatively isolated societies are also ethnocentric in their views about outsiders. It is a cultural universal. Alien cultural traits are often viewed as being not just different but inferior, less sensible, and even "unnatural".

Ethnocentrism results in prejudices about people from other cultures and the rejection of their "alien ways." Our ethnocentrism can prevent us from understanding and appreciating another culture. When there is contact with people from other cultures, ethnocentrism can prevent open communication and result in misunderstanding and mistrust. This would be highly counterproductive for businessmen trying to negotiate a trade deal, professionals who work in areas other than their own or even just neighbors trying to get along with each other. The positive aspect of ethnocentrism has to do with the protection that it can provide for a culture. By causing a rejection of the foods, customs, and perceptions of people in other cultures, it acts as a conservative force in preserving traditions of one's own culture. It can help maintain the separation and uniqueness of cultures.

B. CULTRUALRELATIVISM:

We cannot grasp the behavior of other people if we interpret what they say and do in the light of our values, beliefs, and motives. Instead, we need to examine their behavior as insiders, seeing it within the framework of their values, beliefs and motives. The concept of cultural relativism states that cultures differ, so that a cultural trait, act, or idea has no meaning but its meaning only within its cultural setting.

Cultural relativism suspends judgment and views about the behavior of people from the perspective of their own culture. Every society has its own culture, which is more or less unique. Every culture contains its own unique pattern of behavior which may seem alien to people from other cultural backgrounds. We cannot understand the practices and beliefs separately from the wider culture of which they are part. A culture has to be studied in terms of its own meanings and values. Cultural relativism describes a situation where there is an attitude of respect for cultural differences rather than condemning other people's culture as uncivilized or backward.

Respect for cultural differences involves:

- ✓ Appreciating cultural diversity;
- ✓ Accepting and respecting other cultures;
- ✓ Trying to understand every culture and its elements in terms of its own context and logic;
- ✓ Accepting that each body of custom has inherent dignity and meaning as the way of life of one group which has worked out to its environment, to the biological needs of its members, and to the group relationships;
- ✓ Knowing that a person's own culture is only one among many; and
- ✓ Recognizing that what is immoral, ethical, acceptable, etc, in one culture may not be so in another culture.

C. HUMAN RIGHTS:

In today's world, human rights advocates challenge many of the tenets of cultural relativism. Many anthropologists are uncomfortable with the strong form of cultural relativism that

suggests that all patterns of culture are equally valid. What if the people practice slavery, violence against women, torture, or genocide?

Human rights: rights based on justice and morality beyond and superior to particular countries, cultures, and religions. The idea of **human rights** challenges cultural relativism by invoking a realm of justice and morality beyond and superior to the laws and customs of particular countries, cultures, and religions.

Human rights include the right to speak freely, to hold religious beliefs without persecution, and to not be murdered, injured, or enslaved or imprisoned without charge. Such rights are seen as *inalienable* (nations cannot abridge or terminate them) and international (larger than and superior to individual nations and cultures). A doctrine of **universal human rights**, which emphasizes the rights of the individual over those of the community, would condemn such killings.

Anthropologists respect human diversity. Most ethnographers try to be **objective**, **accurate**, and **sensitive** in their accounts of other cultures**.** However**,** their **objectivity, sensitivity** and a **cross-cultural perspective** got nothing to do with ignoring international standards of justice and morality.

Go to the reference book "*Mirror for Humanity*" pages 50 - 52, suggested at the end of this unit and Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What ideas do you understand from the topics?
- Is ethnocentrism bad or good?
- Is cultural relativism bad or good?
- Why it is important to understand the concept of cultural relativism?
- What do you think about cultural relativism and human rights?

2.6 Culture Change

Dear student, culture changes in several ways; under this section we will discuss how and why cultures change and briefly review some of the widespread changes that have occurred in recent times. Thus, in order to learn more about culture change would you please responding to below question before we go the subsequent texts.

Reflect your views on the following question

- Why and how do cultures change?

When you examine the history of a society, it is obvious that its culture has changed over time. Some of the shared behaviors and ideas that were common at one time are modified or replaced at another time. That is why, any anthropological account of the culture of any society is a type of snapshot view of one particular time. The anthropologists return several years after completing a cultural study, he or she would not find exactly the same situation, for there are no cultures that remain completely static year after year.

Culture change can occur as a result of the following Mechanisms:

i. **Diffusion** The source of new cultural elements in a society may also be another society. The process by which cultural elements are borrowed from another society and incorporated into the culture of the recipient group is called **diffusion.**

- Diffusion is ***direct*** when two cultures trade with, intermarry among, or wage war on one another.
- Diffusion is ***forced*** when one culture subjugates another and imposes its customs on the dominated group.
- Diffusion is ***indirect*** when items or traits move from group A to group C via group B without any firsthand contact between A and C. In this case, group B might consist of traders or merchants who take products from a variety of places to new markets. Or group B might be geographically situated between A and C, so that what it gets from A eventually winds up in C, and vice versa. In today's world, much international

diffusion is indirect-culture spread by the mass media and advanced information technology.

ii. Acculturation

Is the exchange of cultural features that results when groups have continuous firsthand contact?

The cultures of either or both groups may be changed by this contact. This usually happens in situations of trade or colonialism. In situations of continuous contact, cultures have also exchanged and blended foods, recipes, music, dances, clothing, tools, and technologies.

iii. Invention

Invention-the process by which humans innovate, creatively finding solutions to problems is a third mechanism of cultural change. Faced with comparable problems and challenges, people in different societies have innovated and changed in similar ways, which is one reason cultural generalities exist. One example is the independent invention of agriculture in the Middle East and Mexico. Over the course of human history, major innovations have spread at the expense of earlier ones. Often a major invention, such as agriculture, triggers a series of subsequent interrelated changes. Thus in both Mexico and the Middle East, agriculture led to many social, political, and legal changes, including notions of property and distinctions in wealth, class, and power.

iv. **Globalization**

The term globalization encompasses a series of processes, including diffusion and acculturation, working to promote change in a world in which nations and people are increasingly interlinked and mutually dependent. Promoting such linkages are economic and political forces, as well as modem systems of transportation and communication.Due to globalization, long-distance communication is easier, faster, and cheaper than ever, and extends to remote areas. The mass media help propel a globally spreading culture of consumption. Within nations and across their borders, the media spread information about products, services, rights, institutions, lifestyles, and the perceived costs and benefits of globalization. Emigrants transmit information and resources transnationally, as they maintain their ties with home (phoning, faxing, e-mailing, making visits, and sending

money). In a sense such people live multilocally-in different places and cultures at once. They learn to play various social roles and to change behavior and identity depending on the situation.

2.7 Ties That Connect: Marriage, Family and Kinship

Reflect your views on the following question

- What comes to your mind when you think of marriage and family?

Dear student, in one way or another we touched about the importance of culture and aspects of culture in our previous discussions. In this section you will be introduced to the idea of how we as social beings organize ourselves and how the cultural rules governing our ties on marriage, family organization, residence patterns after marriage, forms of descent and descent groups, and other aspects of kinship.

2.7.1 MARRIAGE:

Almost all known societies recognize marriage. The ritual of marriage marks a change in status for a man and a woman and the acceptance by society of the new family that is formed. The term marriage is not an easy terms to define. For years, anthropologists have attempted to define these terms in such a way to cover all known societies**.** Frequently, anthropologists have debated whether or not families and the institutions of marriage are universals. One interesting case is that the *Nayar of* Southern India, did not have marriage in the conventional sense of the term. Although teenage Nayar girls took a ritual husband in a public ceremony, the husband took no responsibility for the women after the ceremony, and frequently he never saw her again. Thus the Nayar do not have marriage according to our definition in that there is no economic, cooperation, regulation of sexual activity, cohabitation, or expectation of permanency.

2.7.1.1 Rules of Marriage

Societies also have rules that state whom one can and cannot marry. Every society know to anthropology has established for itself some type of rules regulating mating (sexual intercourse). The most common form of prohibition is mating with certain type of kin that are defined by the society as being inappropriate sexual partners. These prohibitions on mating with certain categories of relatives known as **incest taboos**. The most **universal form of incest taboo** involves mating between members of the immediate (nuclear) family: mother-sons, father-daughters, and brother-sisters.

There are a few striking examples of marriage between members of the immediate family that violate the universality of the incest taboo. For political, religious, or economic reasons, members of the royal families among the ancient Egyptians, Incas and Hawaiians were permitted to mate with and marry their siblings, although this practiced did not extended to the ordinary members of those societies.

Marriage is, therefore, a permanent legal union between a man and a woman. It is an important institution without which the society could never be sustained.

2.7.1.2 Mate Selection: Whom Should You Marry?

In a society one cannot marry anyone whom he or she likes. There are certain strict rules and regulations.

a) Exogamy:

This is the rule by which a man is not allowed to marry someone from his own social group.

Such prohibited union is designated as incest. Incest is often considered as sin. Different scholars had tried to find out the explanation behind this prohibition. i.e. how incest taboo came into operation.

In fact, there are some definite reasons for which practice of exogamy got approval. They are:

- A conception of blood relation prevails among the members of a group. Therefore, marriage within the group-members is considered a marriage between a brother and sister

- Attraction between a male and female gets lost due to close relationship in a small group.
- There is a popular idea that a great increase of energy and vigor is possible in the progeny if marriage binds two extremely distant persons who possess no kin relation among them.
- Kottak claimed also that exogamy has ***adaptive value***, because it links people into a wider social network that nurtures, helps, and protects them in times of need pushing social organization outward, establishing and preserving alliances among groups.

b) Endogamy:

A rule of endogamy requires individuals to marry within their own group and forbids them to marry outside it. Religious groups such as the Amish, Mormons, Catholics, and Jews have rules of endogamy, though these are often violated when marriage take place outside the group. Castes in India and Nepal are also endogamous. "Indeed, most cultures are endogamous units, although they usually do not need a formal rule requiring people to marry someone from their own society" (Kottak, 2017: 150).

c) Preferential Cousin Marriage:

A common form of preferred marriage is called preferential cousin marriage and is practiced in one form or another in most of the major regions of the world. Kinship systems based on lineages distinguish between two different types of first cousins, these are:

Cross Cousins: are children of siblings of the opposite sex- that is one's mother's brothers' children and one's father's sisters' children.

The most common form of preferential cousin marriage is between cross cousins because it functions to strengthen and maintain ties between kin groups established by the marriages that took place in the proceeding generation.

Parallel Cousins: When marriage takes place between the children of the siblings of the same sex, it is called **parallel cousin marriage**. are children of siblings of the same sex, namely the children of one's mother's sister and one's father brother. The mate may come either from one's father's brother's children or mother's sister's children.

A much less common form of cousin marriage is between parallel cousins, the child of one's mother's sister or father's brother. Found among some Arabic societies in North Africa, it involves the marriage of a man to his father's brother's daughter. Since parallel cousins belong to the same family, such a practice can serve to prevent the fragmentation of family property.

d) The Levirate and Sororate

Another form of mate selection that tends to limit individual choice are those that require a person to marry the husband or wide of deceased kin.

The levirate- is the custom whereby a widow is expected to marry the brother (or some close male relative) of her dead husband. Usually any children fathered by the woman's new husband are considered to belong legally to the dead brother rather than to the actual genitor. Such a custom both serves as a form of social security for the widow and her children and preserved the rights of her husband's family to her sexuality and future children.

The sororate, which comes into play when a wife dies, is the practice of a widower's marrying the sister (or some close female relative) of his deceased wife. In the event that the deceased spouse has no sibling, the family of the deceased is under a general obligation to supply some equivalent relative as a substitute. For example, in a society that practice sororate, a widower may be given as a substitute wife the daughter of his deceased wife's brother.

2.7.1.3. NUMBER OF SPOUSES

Societies have rules regulating whom one may/may not marry; they have rules specifying how manymates a person may/should have.

- ***Monogamy***: the marriage of one man to one woman at a time.
- Polygamy i.e. marriage of a man or woman with two or more mates. Polygamy can be of two types:
    - ✓ ***Polygyny***: the marriage of a man to two or more women at a time.
    - ✓ ***Polyandy:*** the marraige of a woman to two or more men at a time

- ✓ Marriage of a man with two or more sisters at a time is called **sororal polygyny**. When the co-wives are not sisters, the marriage is termed as non-sororal polygyny.

Advantages & Disadvantages of Polygamy marrige

- ✓ Having two/more wives is often seen as a sign of pristige.
- ✓ Having multiple wives means wealth, power, & status both for the polygnous husband, wives and children.
- ✓ It produces more children, who are considered valuable for future economic and poltical assets.
- ✓ Economic advantage: It encourages to work hard (more cows, goats..) for more wives
- ✓ The Drawbacks of Polygyny:Jealousy among the co-wives who fequently compete for the husband's attenttion.

2.7.1.4 Economic Consideration of Marriage

Most societies view as a binding contract between at least the husband and wife and, in many cases, between their respective families as well. Such a contract includes the transfer of certain rights between the parties involved: rights of sexual access, legal rights to children, and rights of the spouses to each other's economic goods and services. Often the transfer of rights is accompanied by the transfer of some type of economic consideration. These transactions, which may take place either before or after the marriage can be divided into three categories:

1. Bride Price
2. Bride Service
3. Dowry

1.Bride Price: It is also known as **bridewealth**, is the compensation given upon marriage by the family of the groom to the family of the bride. According to Murdock, in Africa it was estimated that 82% of the societies require the payment of bride price.

Anthropologists identified a number of important functions that the institutions of bride price performed for the well-being of the society. For example, bride price has been seen:- as security or insurance for the good treatment of the wife: as mechanism to stabilize marriage by reducing the possibility of divorce: as a form of compensation to the bride's lineage for the loss of her economic potential and childbearing capacity: and as a symbol of the union between two large groups of kin.

2. Bride Service: When the groom works for his wife's family, this is known as **bride service**. It may be recalled that in the Old Testament, Jacob labored for seven years in order to marry Leah, and then another seven years to marry Rachel; Leah's younger sister, thus performed fourteen years of bride service for his father-in-law. Bride service was also practiced by the Yanomamo, a people living in the low- lands of Venezuela. During this time, the groom lives with the bride's parents and hunts for them.

3. Dowry: A dowry involves a transfer of goods or money in the opposite direction, from the bride's family to the groom's family.

2.7.1.5 Post-Marital Residence

Where the newly married couple lives after the marriage ritual is governed by cultural rules, which are referred to as **post-marital residence rule.**

- **Patrilocal Residence**: the married couple lives with or near the relatives of the husband's father.
- **Matrilocal Residence**: the married couple lives with or near the relatives of the wife.
- **Avunculocal Residence**: The married couple lives with or near the husband's mother's brother.
- **Ambilocal/Bilocal** Residence: The married couple has a choice of living with relatives of the wife or relatives of the husband
- **Neolocal Residence**: The Married couple forms an independent place of residence away from the relatives of either spouse.

Reflect your views on the following issue

- Please take 15 minutes and write the major types of marriage and a kind of residential place a married couple will take in your locality. And share it with your classmates.

2.7.2 FAMILY

Family is the basis of human society. It is the most important primary group in society. The family, as an institution, is universal. It is the most permanent and most pervasive of all social institutions. The interpersonal relationships within the family make the family an endurable social unit.

Cultural anthropologists have identified two fundamentally different types of family structure-the nuclear family and the extended family.

1. The Nuclear Family: Consisting of husband and wife and their children, the nuclear family is a two-generation family formed around the conjugal or marital union. Even though the unclear family to some degree is part of a larger family structure, it remains relatively autonomous and independent unity. That is, the everyday needs of economic support, childcare, and social interaction are met within the nuclear family itself rather than by a wider set of relatives.

In those societies based on the nuclear family, it is customary for married couple to live apart from either set of parents (neolocal residence), nor is there any particular obligation or expectation for the married couple to care for their aging parents in their own homes. Generally, parents are not actively involved in mate selection for their children, in no way legitimize the marriages of their children, in no way legitimize the marriages of their children, and have no control over whether or not their children remain married.

2. The Extended Family

In societies based on extended families, blood ties are more important than ties of marriage. Extended families consist of two or more families that are linked by blood ties. Most commonly, this takes the form of a married couple living with one or more of their

married children in a single household or homestead and under the authority of a family head.

In the case of a patrilineal extended family, the young couple takes up residence in the homestead of the husband's father, and the husband continues to work for his father, who also runs the household. Moreover, most of the personal property in the household is not owned by the newlyweds, but is controlled by the husbands' father.

It is important to point out that in extended family systems, marriage is viewed more as bringing a daughter into the family than acquiring a wife. In other words, a man's obligations of obedience to his father and loyalty to his brothers is far more important than his relationship to his wife. When a woman marries into an extended family, she most often comes under the control of her mother-in-law, who allocates chores and supervises her domestic activities. As geographical mobility are more likely associated with nuclear family than with extended family. There is a rough correlation found between extended family system and an agricultural way of life.

2.7.2.1 Functions Marriage and Family

Family performs certain specific functions which can be mentioned as follows:

1. **Biological Function**: The institution of marriage and family serves biological (sexual and reproductive) function. The institution of marriage regulates and socially validates long term, sexual relations between males and females. Thus, husband wife relationship come into existence and become a socially approved means to control sexual relation and a socially approved basis of the family. Sexual cohabitation between spouses automatically leads to the birth of off-springs. The task of perpetuating the population of a society is an important function of a family. Society reproduces itself through family.

2. **Economic Function**: Marriage brings economic co-operation between men and women and ensure survival of individuals in a society. With the birth of off-springs the division of labor based on sex and generation come into play. In small scale societies family is a self-contained economic unit of production, consumption and distribution.

3. **Social Function**: Marriage is based on the desire to perpetuate one's family line. In marriage one adds, not only a spouse but most of the spouse's relatives to one's own group of kin. This means the institution of marriage brings with it the creation and perpetuation of the family, the form of person to person relations and linking once kin group to another kin group.

4. **Educational and Socialization Function**: The burden of socialization (via processes of enculturation and education) of new born infants fall primarily upon the family. In addition, children learn an immense amount of knowledge, culture, values prescribed by society, before they assume their place as adult members of a society. The task of educating and enculturating children is distributed among parents. Moreover, family behaves as an effective agent in the transmission of social heritage.

2.7.3 KINSHIP

A significant concept in Anthropology – The concept of kinship is vitally important in Anthropology, because kinship and family constitute the focal points in anthropological studies.

Kinship is the method of reckoning relationship. In any society every adult individual belongs to two different nuclear families. The family in which he was born and reared is called **'family of orientation**'. The other family to which he establishes relation through marriage is called **'family of procreation'**. A kinship system is neither a social group nor does it correspond to organized aggregation of individuals. It is a structured system of relationships where individuals are bound together by complex interlocking and ramifying ties.

The relationship based on blood ties is called **"consanguineous kinship**", and the relatives of this kind are called 'consanguineous kin'. The desire for reproduction gives rise to another kind of binding relationship. "This kind of bond, which arises out of a socially or legally defined marital relationship, is called a final relationship", and the relatives so related are called **'a final kin'**. The final kinds [husband and wife] are not related to one another through blood.

2.7.4 DESCENT

Descent refers to the social recognition of the biological relationship that exists between the individuals. The **rule of descent** refers to a set of principles by which an individual traces his descent. In almost all societies kinship connections are very significant. An individual always possesses certain obligations towards his kinsmen and he also expects the same from his kinsmen. Succession and inheritance is related to this rule of descent. There are three importantrules of decent are follows;

1. **Patrilineal descent**

When descent is traced solely through the male line, it is called **patrilineal descent**. A man's sons and daughters all belong to the same descent group by birth, but it only the sons who continue the affiliation. Succession and inheritance pass through the male line.

2. Matrilineal descent

When the descent is traced solely through the female line. It is called **matrilineal descent**. At birth, children of both sexes belong to mother's descent group, but later only females acquire the succession and inheritance. Therefore, daughters carry the tradition, generation after generation.

3. Cognatic Descent

In some society's individuals are free to show their genealogical links either through men or women. Some people of such society are therefore connected with the kin-group of father and others with the kin group of mothers. There is no fixed rule to trace the succession and inheritance; any combination of lineal link is possible in such societies.

Reflect your views on the following questions

- How do families and marriage differ in different societies?
- What do you see as the main differences between nuclear and extended families?

☙ Origin and evolution of human beings?

2.8 Unit Summary

Dear Students!

In this unit we have treated the central concept of anthropology which is culture. Culture consists of the things people make, their behavior, their beliefs and ideas. Using a comparative perspective, anthropology examines biological, psychological, social, and cultural universals and generalities. There are also unique and distinctive aspects of the human condition. The belief that one's own culture represents the best way to do things is known as ethnocentrism. Cultural relativism is the idea that each culture is unique and distinctive, but that no one culture is superior. We have also underscored that culture is always changing. Mechanisms of cultural change include diffusion, acculturation, and independent invention. In addition, globalization describes a series of processes that promote change in our world in which nations and people are increasingly interlinked and mutually dependent.

The other important topic of our discussion in this unit has concentrated on ties that unite such as family; marriage and kinship. The incest taboo and marriage prohibitions compel individuals to marry outside the family. Societies have rules regarding number of spouses and post marital residence rules, which result in the creation of a variety of types of families. Societies also have rules regarding how marriage is contracted Different types of marriage rules result in different structures of relationship or alliance between descent groups. Kinship terminology in different societies reflects the pattern of descent, family type, and marriage found in those societies.

2.9 Assessment techniques

The assessment methods to be used in this unit include; quiz, group assignment, individual assignments, administering different examinations and mandatory reading assignments.

Facilities required:

White/Blackboard, LCD/Power Point Presentations, Whiteboard Markers…. etc.

Suggested Reading Materials

Rosman. A, Rubel, G.P. and Weisgrau, M. (Eds) . (2009)— *The Tapestry of Culture : An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (9th ed.) Rowman & Owman & Owman & Little Field Publisher Inc.

Beattie, J. (1964). Other Cultures: Aims, Methods and Achievements in Social Anthropology. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

Ferraro, G. (1992), *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective.* St. Paul: West Publishing Company

Kottak, C. P. (2004), *Anthropology: the Exploration of Human Diversity* (10thed.).McGraw Hill, New York.

Kottak, C. P. (2005*). Mirror for Humanity: Introduction to social Anthropology. (*5thed.). McGraw Hill, New York

Keesing, R. (1981). *Cultural Anthropology: A Contemporary Perspective.* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill Inc.

Scupin, R. and DeCorse, R.C. . (1988). *Anthropology: A Global Perspective* (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Unit-Three

3. Human Diversity, Culture Areas and Contact in Ethiopia

Study Hours: 8 face-to-face hours

Dear Learners!

Welcome to unit three. The unit deals with human diversity, culture areas and contact in Ethiopia. In this unit, we believe you will get a better understanding of what makes humanity different from other animal species within the animal kingdom and how did diverse groups of people emerge across the globe through time. The unit is structured in such a way that you will be able to recognize/ find out the sources of human variation emanating from environmental, evolutionary and cultural factors.

As a result, in this unit, you will be introduced to themes such as humanity, human diversity or variation, race, racial forms, culture areas and aspects of contact in the context of Ethiopia.

Throughout the unit, you are kindly persuaded to participate actively in class activities and discussions; share your experience with others in class and on campus; engage in debates and arguments and handle assignments in and out of classroom.

Contents of the Unit:

The major themes covered in this unit are: notions of humanity, diversity, human diversity, race and racial types. Besides, the unit discusses culture area, cultural contact and historical trajectories of contact between different culture areas in Ethiopia.

Unit learning outcomes:

Up on the successful completion of this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the concept of humanity, diversity/variation, race and racial types
- Figure out the unique characteristics that make humanity different from other animal species
- Recognize human diversity and variation across the world from environmental, evolutionary and cultural perspectives

- Sort out the diverse culture areas of Ethiopia
- Appreciate the unavoidable and necessary aspect of cultural diversity in Ethiopia
- Understand the historical trajectories of cultural contact in the context of Ethiopia

3.1. Human Beings & Being Human: What it is to be human?

Reflect your views on the following questions

- What do you understand by the term humanity, diversity, and human diversity/variation?
- What makes human beings different fromother animals?
- Origin and evolution of human beings?

As you learnt in the first two units of this module, anthropology is a broader discipline covering a vast spatio-temporal dimension in the study of man/humanity. Since anthropology studies humanity in its entirety, it is often called a mirror of humanity. As Kluckhohn correctly pointed out: "Anthropology holds up a great mirror to man and lets him look at himself in his infinite variety." In this case, anthropology helps human beingsto look into themselves by searching for answers to questions that challenge us. Some of the questions central to humanity and anthropology are:

- What are the commonalities among humans worldwide? (That is what does every human culture do?)
- What are the variations among humans worldwide (That is, what things do only some cultures do?)
- Why do these commonalties and variations exist in the first place? (In other worlds why aren't all human cultures the same?)
- How does humanity change through time? (Is it still evolving, and if so, how?)

- Where has Humanity been, and what can that show us about where humanity is going? (That is, what can we learn about ourselves today, from the past?)

In order to address these questions, we should rely on key anthropological concepts of comparative approach (cultural relativism) and evolution. The comparative approach, which is also known as cultural relativism, entails that cultures shouldn't be compared one another for the sake of saying one is better than the other. Instead cultures should be compared in order to understand how and why they differ and share commonalties each other. The comparative approach or cultural relativism encourages us not to make moral judgments about different kinds of humanity, and it examines cultures on their own and from the perspective of their unique history and origin.

Evolution is another key concept in anthropology which, together with the comparative approach (cultural relativism) allows us to the address the afore-mentioned fundamental questions regarding our distant origin, current stage of growth, forms of adaptation, and predict future direction of development. By studying evolution, the change of speciesthrough time, anthropologists tend to treat humanity as one of the biological species in the animal kingdom.

In this respect, human biology and culture have evolved over millions of years and they will continue to evolve together. Human biology affects human culture; and similarly, human culture affects human biology. One example of this is that the brain size of humans has become larger over millions of years of evolution, and this is considered biological change. Whereas, the change in human brain has brought cultural changes in terms of increased intelligence, language and even the emergence of writing. This is why anthropologists use the term biocultural to describe the dual nature of human evolution: both biological and cultural dimensions. Human beings are described as a biocultural animal. In what follows we will see the meaning of biocultural evolution with practical examples.

3.1.1. The biocultural animal?

As we have discussed above, humanity evolves both as a result of biological factors and cultural factors. For this reason, anthropologists call it **biocultural evolution**. Culture, which you have learnt at length in unit two of this module, is the set of ideas that dictate how you see and act in the world. Although humans survive by using both their biology and cultural information, all other animals survive mainly through their biology and by relying on instinct rather than such cultural information.

For example, cultural, not instinctual, information tells you certain kinds of wood are good for making a digging stick. You don't know about different kinds of wood instinctually but because detailed information about the properties of different kinds of wood was passed on to your mind culturally — through some form of language — by your parent generation or your peers.

This difference may seem trivial, but it's actually very important. For example, consider the following cultural behaviors and their possible involvement with biological evolution of our species:

- The earliest use of stone tools corresponds with increased consumption of animal protein. More animal protein in turn changes the hominid diet and potentially its anatomy.
- The use of clothing (itself a cultural artifact) allows human bodies to survive in environments they wouldn't normally survive in. For example, the human body is naturally best-suited for equatorial environments, not the Arctic, but the invention of heavy coats and other such clothing enables that body to survive Arctic temperatures.

As a result, Paleo-anthropologists are concerned with understanding how cultural, non-cultural, and bio-cultural evolutionary factors shaped humanity through time. If this is the case, let us first see the meaning of humanity from the anthropological perspective.

Humanity is the most common term we to use refer to human beings. Humanity stands for the human species, a group of life forms with the following characteristics:

- ✓ Bipedalism (walking on two legs);

- ✓ Relatively small teeth for primates of our size;
- ✓ Relatively large brains for primates of our size;
- ✓ Using modern language to communicate ideas; and
- ✓ Using complex sets of ideas called culture to survive.

Standing on two legs and having particularly small teeth and large brains are all anatomical characteristics, and they're studied by anthropologists focusing on human biological evolution. Surviving by using a wide array of cultural information (including instructions for making a pottery or farming tools in Ethiopia) is the use of culture. It's studied by other anthropologists, and even more study the evolution of language.

Humanity is a general term that doesn't specify whether you're talking about males, females, adults, or children; it simply means our species- *Homo sapiens sapiens*- at large. The term *humanity* can be applied to modern humans *(Homo sapiens sapiens)* as well as some of our most recent ancestors, placed more generally in *Homo sapiens,* without the subspecies (the second *sapiens*) suffix. Exactly when *Homo sapiens* evolved into *Homo sapiens sapiens* is a complex question based on when humans became *anatomically* modern and when they became *behaviorally* modern.

Reflect your views on the following issue

- ☙ Write short essay on the difference between anatomical modernity and behavioural modern origin and evolution of human beings?

3.2 Origin of the Modern Human Species: Homo sapiens sapiens

Reflect your views on the following questions

- What does different world religions and cosmologies say about the origin of human beings?
- What about scientific (paleo-anthropological explanations) about the origin and evolution of human beings?

3.2 1. Cosmologies Vs. Evolutionally and Paleo-anthropological Explanations

One of the major questions anthropologists grapple with is the origins of humankind. The fossil record preserves evidence of past life on Earth, tracing a progression of simple one-celled organisms to increasingly diverse forms. How did these different forms of life emerge and new species arise? The biological explanations for this process is the focus of this section.

Theories concerning the evolution of life date back to the ancient Greeks, but it was only during the 19thcentury that the first comprehensive theories of evolution were developed. They were made possible through discoveries in many different areas. The acceptance of evolutionary theory is based on research in many fields. Indeed, the value of evolutionary theory is its utility as a unifying explanation for a wide variety of phenomena. Before examining the scientific basis for our understanding of evolution, it is useful to consider other explanations of human origins.

3.2.1.1 Cosmologies and Human Origins

The most profound questions are the ones that perplex us the most. Where did we come from? Why are we here? What is our place in the universe? These questions have been shared by many people throughout history. Most cultures have developed explanations that provide answers to these fundamental questions. Cosmologies are conceptual frameworks that present the universe (the *cosmos*) as an orderly system. They often include answers to these basic questions about human origins and the place of human kind in the universe, usually considered the most sacred of all cosmological conceptions.

Cosmologies account for the ways in which supernatural beings or forces formed human beings and the planet we live on. These beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation through ritual, education, laws, art, and language. For example, the Navajo people of the southwestern United States believe that the Holy People, supernatural and sacred, lived below ground in 12 lower worlds. A massive underground flood forced the Holy People to crawl through a hollow reed to the surface of the Earth, where they created the universe. A deity named Changing Woman gave birth to the Hero Twins, called Monster Slayer and Child of the Waters. Human mortals, called Earth Surface People, emerged, and First Man and First Woman were formed from the ears of white and yellow corn.

In the tradition of Taoism, male and female principles known as *yin* and *yang* are the spiritual and material sources for the origins of humans and other living forms. Yin is considered the passive, negative, feminine force or principle in the universe, the source of cold and darkness, whereas yang is the active, positive, masculine force or principle, the source of heat and light. Taoists believe that the interaction of these two opposite principles brought forth the universe and all living forms out of chaos. These examples illustrate just two of the highly varied origin traditions held by different people around the world.

Western Traditions of Origins

In Western cultural traditions, the ancient Greeks had various mythological explanations for human origins. One early view was that Prometheus fashioned humans out of water and earth. Another had Zeus ordering Pyrrha, the inventor of fire, to throw stones behind his back, which in turn became men and women. Later Greek views considered bio- logical evolution. The Greek philosopher Thales of Miletus (c.636–546BC) attempted to understand the origin and the existence of the world without reference to mythology. He argued that life originated in the sea and that humans initially were fishlike, eventually moving onto dry land and evolving in to mammals.

The most important cosmological tradition affecting Western views of creation is recounted in the biblical Book of Genesis, which is found in Greek texts dating back to the 3rdcentury BC. This Judaic tradition describes how God created the cosmos. It begins with “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” and describes how creation

took six days during which light, heaven, Earth, vegetation, Sun, Moon, stars, birds, fish, animals, and humans originated. Yahweh, the Creator, made man, Adam, from “dust” and placed him in the Garden of Eden. Woman, Eve, was created from Adam’s rib. Later, as Christianity spread throughout Europe, this tradition became the dominant cosmological explanation of human origins.

In Europe before the Renaissance, the Judeo-Christian view of creation provided the only framework for understanding humanity’s position in the universe. The versions of creation discussed in the biblical text fostered a specific concept of time: a linear, non-repetitive, unique historical framework that began with divine creation. These events were chronicled in the Bible; there was no concept of an ancient past stretching far back in time before human memory. This view led some theologians to attempt to calculate the precise age of the Earth on the basis of information in the Bible, such as references to births and deaths and the number of generations mentioned. One of the best known of these calculations was done by Archbishop James Ussher of Ireland (1581–1656). By calculating the number of generations mentioned in the Bible and drawing of classical writers, Ussher dated the beginning of the universe to the year 4004 BC. Thus, according to Bishop Ussher’s estimate, the Earth was approximately 6,000 years old.

The biblical account of creation led to a static, fixed view of plant and animal species and the age of the Earth. Because the Bible recounted the creation of the world and everything on it in six days, medieval theologians reasoned that the various species of plants and animals must be fixed in nature. God had created plant and animal species to fit perfectly within specific environments and did not intend for them to change. They had been unaltered since the time of the divine creation, and no new species had emerged. This idea regarding the permanence of species influenced the thinking of many early scholars and theologians.

3.2.1.2. Evolutionary and paleo-anthropological perspectives on human origin

As opposed to cosmological explanations that we discussed above, today anthropologist rely on scientific views of evolution in order to explain human origins. Simply put, evolution refers to a process and gradual change in specie over time.

In fact, evolution is used to describe the **cumulative effects** of three independent facts. Importantly, these attributes of evolution can be observed in nature every day. They are:

- **Replication:** The fact that life forms have offspring;
- **Variation:** The fact that each offspring is slightly different from its parents, and its siblings; and
- **Selection:** The fact that not all offspring survive, and those that do tend to be the ones best suited to their environment.

The scientific explanation of human origin and the concept of evolution are attributed to a series of discoveries of early modern period and the works of handful of scientists in the physical/natural sciences. One of the prominent persons in relation to this development is Charles Darwin (1809-1882), a British Naturalist of the period. Charles Darwin is known for his theory of **natural selection** in the evolution of species and the idea of **survival of the fittest**.

One of Charles Darwin's contributions to civilization was to demonstrate that humanity was part of the world of living things, not separate from it. For thousands of years, Western civilization, backed up by the biblical story of creation, held humanity as a special creation fundamentally different from all other living things. By Darwin's time, many were beginning to question this assessment, but the cultural pressure to conform to the dominant religion prevented most from saying so out loud. But Darwin's ideas and the many it fertilized set the foundation for a new study: the study of humans as living, evolving creatures in many ways no different from the rest of animal life.

Today, anthropologists have countless amount of data, much of it based on studies of DNA, the molecule that shapes all Earth life, to back the claims Darwin made in 1859. In doing so, anthropologists study humanity as a biological phenomenon by raising questions such as:

- What species are we most and least like?
- Where and when did we fist appear?
- What were our ancestors like?

- Can we learn about human behavior from the behavior of our nearest relatives, the chimpanzees and gorillas?
- Is our species still evolving? How do modern human genetics, population growth, and other current issues play out from a biological perspective?

The answers to the above mentioned and many other questions about our species in the study of *evolution,* the change through time of the properties of a living species. That's because evolution is the foundation of the life sciences. Many kinds of life forms have become extinct (like the dinosaurs), but each of today's living species (including humanity) has an evolutionary ancestry that reaches far back in time.

3.3 The Kinds of Humanity: human physical variation

Reflect your views on the following questions

- Why isn't everyone the same?
- Why do people worldwide have differences in their phenotypic attributes?

People come in many colors and shapes; people of the Mediterranean, for example, are obviously darker-skinned than those of Scandinavia, and natives of the Arctic are shorter and stockier than the tall, lean Samburu of East Africa. Why is this? How did these variations come about, and what do they mean for humanity as a species?

The answer comes from the study of human biology by physical anthropologists. In this section we will see how human populations have adapted to their varying environments by the same evolutionary process that shapes all living things from the perspective of race.

3.3.1. Racial types- anthropological perspectives

Like all living things with sensory input, humans have to classify their perceptions into some kind of order: These things go with these others but don't belong in this group. Some people have darker skin, so they're in the "darker skin" category. And the list goes on. Obviously, not all human beings look the same, so humans have spent some time putting people of

different colors, body shapes, and so on into different categories sometimes called races. Unfortunately, this tendency has had some very bad consequences for millions of human beings over the centuries.

Biologically speaking, a **race** is a group of organisms of the same species that share similar physical (and genetic) attributes and specific geographic regions. In short, they're subdivisions of a single species- meaning they can mate and have offspring that are healthy enough to have their own offspring-exhibiting some characteristics reflecting their geographical origins.

This definition is pretty slippery, though, because finding good examples of distinctly different races is difficult. The most visible non-human animal races are those of dogs. Wherever you go, all dogs are in the same species-*Canis familiaris*- but they have obvious physical differences. Strictly speaking, they're of different races - and even this isn't so strict, because these differences come from humans selectively breeding these animals for certain characteristics, not from their originally inhabiting very different environments. Once, all dogs (most likely first domesticated about 20,000 years ago) were wolf-like, and their modern diversity is more a result of human selective breeding than geographical adaptation.

Just like any other living thing, human beings adapt to their environments through an evolutionary process. Throughout this unit we will see the ways in which our species adapts mainly through cultural means; that is, we survive our environments not because we've adapted to them biologically, but with artifacts and complex behavior. In this respect, it should be noted that human bodies (human beings) have adapted to certain conditions over time.

Adaptation is can be understood as a process (behavioural and/or biological) that increases the likelihood of survival for an organism. An adaptation can be a mutation that confers an advantage. For example, a frog that has better-camouflaged skin than its siblings has a lower chance of being snapped up by a fish, and therefore a stronger chance to survive and have offspring that will carry the gene for better-adapted camouflage. In humans, adaptations include complex behavior, such as making tools. These behaviors aren't passed on genetically but rather culturally.

Some of these bodily adaptations are pretty easily visible, and some are only visible when you look very closely at the genes. Skin color—one of the most visible human characteristics — is a good example of adaptation to a particular environment. The darkest skin appears in populations originating in tropical zones, such as Africa and Asia. The lightest skin is traditionally found in northern Europe because over time, natural selection favored darker skins in areas that received extensive and more intensive sunlight, because individuals with lighter skin in these areas were more prone to skin cancers. Darker skin, then, is an adaptation to the geographical conditions of Africa.

What's the adaptive value of lighter skin? It has to do with vitamin D, of all things. Vitamin D is a nutrient that helps human bones form properly. Without enough vitamin D, deformities like the disease *rickets*, which normally includes bowed legs and a misshapen pelvis, will occur.

Humans naturally produce Vitamin D through the skin when they're exposed to sunlight, but cloudier parts of the world — like northern Europe — are exposed to much less sunlight than regions in the tropics, where the species began. As early human populations were expanding into northern Europe around 40,000 years ago, those individuals with darker skin were less able to manufacture Vitamin D and probably experienced a much lower birthrate than those populations with lighter skin. Lighter skin, then, is an adaptation to the geographical conditions of Europe because over time, the prehistoric colonists of Europe who happened to be born with lighter skin (simply by chance) had more offspring, who themselves carried the genes for lighter skin.

Biological adaptations aren't instantaneous. They take place over the span of generations, so an African moving to Europe won't evolve lighter skin, nor will a European travelling to Africa evolve darker skin (except for some tanning). A suntan is a lighter-skinned body's defense mechanism — the release of dark pigmented melanin — against too much ultraviolet light.

Another example of biological adaptation in human beings is the difference of stature between arctic (such as Inuit) and East African (such as Maasai) people. In biology, ***Bergmann's rule*** indicates that in colder regions, warm-blooded animals will have stockier bodies than their counterparts from warmer regions, because stockier bodies are more

efficient at retaining body heat. In the cold polar regions, the Inuit have a short and stocky build; the Maasai of East Africa have taller and more slender bodies that don't have to retain so much heat — they actually have to dump excess heat in their hot environment, which is facilitated by their body shape. Body stature in these cases is an adaptation to the geographical conditions of hot African and the cold Arctic.

The rapid physiological changes that occur in one's lifetime — like a mountaineer's adjustment to lower oxygen levels at high altitude — are referred to as *habituation* or *acclimatization*. These *aren't* passed on genetically to the next generation (because changes acquired during life can't be encoded in the genes,) and they're reversible (as when the mountaineer returns to lower elevations.)

3.3.2. What Anthropologists can say for sure about Human Races?

So do human races exist? Very strictly speaking, yes. *Homo sapiens sapiens* does feature geographically based differences within the species. However, you must consider two very important points.

First, these genetic differences don't mean a lot, biologically. Because all healthy humans can mate and have healthy offspring, we're all in *Homo sapiens sapiens,* biologically speaking. Don't let anyone tell you different. Not only is it inaccurate to say "the female species" when talking about significant sex differences between males and females, but it's also inaccurate to say "the African race" or the "European race" when speaking of deep differences in these peoples. A look at the genes shows no significant species-level differences — only very minor visible ones such as skin color, shape of nose, or hair texture. Biologically speaking, though, these differences aren't important. For most physical anthropologists (who've spent the most time closely examining human biology), race is nearly meaningless when applied to humanity.

Rather than talk about races, physical anthropologists more commonly talk today of ancestry, a more general term that recognizes the reality of some geographically specific human adaptations but doesn't turn them into loaded, black-and-white races (pun intended.) Ancestry may be important, for example, when considering someone's genetic health because different human populations have developed slightly different genetic characteristics over time.

Second — and most important — is that cultural behavior isn't genetically linked to those geographical differences. This disconnect is one of anthropology's most important discoveries and lessons for humanity. People from Scandinavia aren't reserved — or whatever other behavioral trait you may apply to them — because it's in their genes to be so. It's not. Most of human behavior isn't biologically determined or filtered in through the natural environment — most of it is culturally learned. An infant from Japan can be raised in the Kalahari of Southern Africa and won't automatically remove his shoes when going into a home unless his culture specifically teaches him to do so. Like any human can acquire any language, any infant can acquire any culture; it's culture that really drives behavior, not the genes. The ancient belief that human races have innate behavioral traits — industrious Asians or hot-blooded Mediterraneans — is simply wrong.

One of the main reasons the race concept really doesn't apply to humans is that defining human races is almost impossible: To what race do you assign a person born from a Native American and a native African marriage? Do you create a new race in this case? Although some of these designations do exist, to come up with a race for every possible combination of ancestries would be an infinite job. Plus, it would just be another exercise in drawing lines where they don't really exist. And what's "black" or "white"? Is a Greek person black or white? Of course, they're in between. Assigning people to a race based on skin color becomes an exercise in holding up paint chips to the skin.

3.4 Human Races: the history of racial typing

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- what can you say for sure about human races?

Like all animals, humans have undoubtedly been classifying their neighbors in various ways for a very long time.

Some of the first records of humans classifying others as certain "types" come from ancient Egypt, where by 1350 BC you can see records of them classifying humans by skin color:

Egyptians were red-skinned, people south of Egypt were black-skinned, those living north of the Mediterranean Sea were white-skinned, and people to the east were yellow-skinned.

By the the16th century, during the Age of Discovery, Europeans voyaging around the world were encountering many previously unknown peoples and developing racial classifications of their own. Because skin color was so noticeable, many racial classifications were based only on that factor. Additionally, these unknown people weren't Christian and didn't share European culture and values, so the Europeans labeled them Savages. In fact, they thought they could use racial type as an indicator of just how Savage a person was. The less European-looking, of course, the more Savage. Though most have ditched this concept today, many racial supremacists still believe that cultural behavior correlates with skin color, nose shape, hair texture, or what have you.

Some naturalists in the 16th through 19th centuries proposed that savages were even a different *species* than white Europeans, saying that they shouldn't even be considered human. This classification made persecution and enslavement of different peoples purely because of how they looked much easier. Early attempts by Europeans to categorize people into racial schemes were extremely biased and hierarchical, associating morality and intelligence with skin color and other physical attributes. These schemes always placed Europeans at the top of the scale, and the successively darker-skinned peoples at the bottom.

By the mid-1800s, naturalists began using a method of describing the shape of the head called the *cephalic index*, a ratio measurement of the length and width of the head. *Dolichocephalic* peoples had long and narrow heads (like most northern Europeans), and *brachycephalic* peoples tended to have broad heads — like many southern Europeans. Not surprisingly, this classification scheme and others like it led to many arguments about which peoples were superior to the others.

The root problem of all this flailing around at the identification of human types was *biological determinism*, the idea that physical traits were somehow linked to behavior. Many thought traits like intellect, values, and morals were all products of one's race. Today, most people know better, although some people still wear sheets and call for "racial purity," an impossible and destructive idea.

A similar way that everyone — including early anthropologists — had this idea all wrong was in the application of Darwin's principles of biological evolution to societies. This led to a concept known as *social Darwinism***,** the idea that as societies and nations evolved and competed, the morally superior societies would prevail as the less-moral, "savage" societies were weeded out, and that this was all natural and good. Around this time debates about the superiority or inferiority of particular groups continued and some began to fear that civilized (meaning northern European Christian) society was slowly being destroyed by "unfit" peoples who, for one reason or another, were not being weeded out.

With behavioral characteristics "linked" to genetic characteristics in the minds of many (including scientists), some in the 19th and early 20th centuries even advocated for state regulation of marriages, family size, and whether to allow an individual to reproduce. This practice became known as *eugenics*, and the Nazis took it to a terrible extreme during World War II. In Germany, the Nazi party began to systematically kill those members of society that it considered inferior to the northern-European Christian ideal they held. Using eugenics as the basis for its acts, the Nazi party killed millions of Jewish people, Gypsies and others it considered inferior in an attempt to create a master race.

The problems with the concept of a master race — aside from the obvious moral issues surrounding eugenics — is that biological variation is necessary for the health of a population. Basically, if all members of a population are the same, the population has no buffer against a particularly lethal or catastrophic disease or any other major change in the species' selective environment. If everyone is the same, everyone is susceptible to the same potential disaster. For this reason, many biologists measure the overall health of a species by its very genetic diversity. So even if a master race were possible, and one could (and would want to) manage to prevent any interbreeding, the end result would be a genetically uniform and genetically vulnerable population. The idea of a master race is therefore suicidal.

3.5 The Grand Illusion: Race, turns out, is arbitrary

Reflect your views on the following question

- Why do you think is race become an elusive concept?

Over the years, various anthropologists have attempted to classify the human species into various races, such as Caucasian, Black African, Asian, and so on. The problem is that the physical traits used to identify which group an individual belonged in aren't binary opposites like black or white, period, with no middle ground. They're *continuous* traits, meaning that a whole spectrum exists between, say, "black" and "white" skin designations.

Any attempt to classify human races raises a number of questions. Although Asians look pretty clearly different from Europeans in some respects, what do you do with people who look, well, partly Asian and partly European? And does "European" end in the Middle East, where some African traits are present? Where does Africa even begin, genetically speaking? Who's going to draw up the lines between "black" and "white" (and what qualifies that person for the job, anyway)? One thorough 1972 study by Harvard anthropologist R.C. Lewontin concluded that "Human racial classification is of no social value and is positively destructive of social and human relations. Since such racial classification is now seen to be of virtually no genetic or taxonomic [classifying] significance either, no justification can be offered for its continuance." Bottom line: For most professional anthropologists today, human "race" is an antiquated concept. For biomedical reasons (and sometimes forensic identification of bodies), the reality of genetic ancestry can be important, but color coded races, loaded with behavioral traits, are basically arbitrary.

3.6. Why is Everyone Different? Human Cultural Diversity/Variation

Reflect your views on the following question

- Why don't others do things the way we/you do?

Although all humans are of the same species, they don't all act the same; human behavior varies tremendously worldwide. If race doesn't control a person's characteristics, what does account for human behavioral variation? In short, the answer is culture. Cultures differ because people live in different conditions, be they ecological, economic, social, or what have you. For example, each culture is ultimately a unique adaptation to the social and environmental conditions in which it evolves. The culture of the Amazonian foragers has certain characteristics, and they value certain things and act certain ways, because they have evolved in a particular ecological environment, one different from highland Scots, whose own culture is an adaptation to their unique environment. This difference is ultimately why human behavior isn't the same worldwide.

Of course, human cultures have been evolving for thousands of years — and in the modern age, with mass communication and mass movement of peoples from one environment and culture to another, culture has changed very quickly.

3.7. Culture area and cultural contact in Ethiopia

Put simply culture areas refers to a cluster of related cultures occupying a certain geographical region. In anthropology the concept of culture area has been used beginning from the 1920s where Afred Kroeber and his contemporaries were interested in examining the concentration of cultural trains in a given geographic area.

In the context of Ethiopia, we may come up with different culture are in relation to subsistence. These are plough culture, *Enset* culture area, pastoral societies culture area.

A. Plough culture area

Plough culture area represents those parts of the country where agriculture is predominantly the means by which subsistence is eked out. Most of highland and central

parts of the country serves as the backbone of the economy is considered a plough culture. The area often called plough culture has been a subject of anthropological inquires over the past seven decades starting from the 1950s. Some of the ethnographers who studied the area that we call plough culture are Donald Levine, Allen Hobben, Fredrick Gamst and Jack Bauer.

B. Enset culture area

Enset culture area, on the other hand, covers a vast region in the southern part of country. *Enset* cultivating regions of the present day SNNPRS such as the Guraghe, Sidama and Gedeo areas constitute *enset* culture area. In this region, *enset* serves as a staple diet to the people who make use the plant in a wide variety of forms for a living.

C. Pastoral culture area

Pastoral culture area is found in the low land areas covering a large section of the Afar in the northwest, Somali in the southeast and Borena of southern of Ethiopia. As opposed ot the above the cases, inhabitants of the pastoral culture area rely significantly on their herds and cattle for a living. Mobility of people and herds is a major characteristic feature of the people occupying the pastoral culture area.

Reflect your views on the following question

- Search for anthropological findings/studies in your library focusing on plough culture, *enset* culture and pastoral culture areas in Ethiopia. Summarize the finding of scholars in a group of five students and present the result of you work in class to your instructor and students.
- How do you explain the pattern of historical interaction between the different culture areas of the country discussed in this unit?
- What other culture areas can identify in the country in addition to the above three types?

3.8. Unit Summary

Dear learners!

In this unit, we have covered a wide variety of issues including human origins, humanity, diversity, race and racial types, culture areas of Ethiopia at length. By now you know what it means to be human? what is meant by biocultural animal, the difference and similarities among human population, and the cultural explanation for human variation across the world. In addition, we have discussed three different culture areas in the context of Ethiopia by taking subsistence into consideration.

3.9. Assessment Techniques

The assessment methods to be used in this unit include; quiz, group assignment, individual assignments, administering different examinations and mandatory reading assignments.

3.9 Facilities required:

White/Blackboard, LCD/Power Point Presentations, Whiteboard Markers…. etc.

Suggested reading materials:

Kottack, C. P. (2007). Mirror for Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (5th ed.). McGraw Hill, Boston.

Scupin, R. and DeCorse, R.C. (1988). *Anthropology: A Global Perspective* (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Scupin, R. and DeCorse, R.C. . (2016). *Anthropology: A Global Perspective* (8th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Smith, M. C. and Davies, T. E. (1998). Anthropology for Dummies. Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing Inc.

Tuniz, C. and Vipraio, T.P . (2015). Human: An Unauthorized Biography. Springer, Switzerland.

Unit Four

4. Marginalized, Minorities, and Vulnerable Groups

Study Hours: 4 Face to Face Hours

Dear Students!

Welcome to Unit Four. In the previous unit we have seen the nature and dimensions of human cultural diversity explained using socially constructed concepts such as of race. We also discussed issues related culture areas, culture contact and cross-cultural similarities in the Ethiopian setting. Unit Four focuses on issues of marginalization and vulnerability. It specifically deals with different forms of marginalization targeting occupational groups, women, children, and older people, religious and ethnic minorities. It also discusses the human right approaches, the notion of inclusiveness in anthropological perspective. In due course, students are required to assume active role in class activities and discussions; sharing of experiences, undertaking different debates and arguments and take-home assignments.

Contents of the Unit

- Concepts related to marginalization
- Gender-based marginalization
- Marginalized occupational groups
- Age-based vulnerability: marginalization of children and older persons
- Marginalization of religious and ethnic minorities
- Inclusiveness and the human rights approach

Unit Learning Outcomes

Up on the successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- define concepts related to marginalization
- identify forms of marginalization targeting different social groups and populations
- analyze the major causes and manifestations of different forms of marginalization

- discuss the notion of inclusiveness and the human rights approach to protect vulnerable and minority groups
- suggest viable ways of promoting inclusive approaches and protecting marginalized and vulnerable groups

Introduction

In the previous unit, we discussed issues such as human diversity in terms of race, religion and culture in broader sense. We also dealt with culture areas, culture contact and cross-cultural similarities in the Ethiopian context. In this unit, we will discuss issues related to marginalized, minority and vulnerable groups focusing on global and Ethiopia settings. The chapter specifically focuses on marginalization of women, children, occupational, religious and ethnic minorities. Let us begin with definition of some concepts.

4.1 Definition of concepts

What is marginalization? Marginalization is defined as a treatment of a person or social group as minor, insignificant or peripheral. Marginalization involves exclusion of certain groups from social interactions, marriage relations, sharing food and drinks, and working and living together.

Who are mostly marginalized? There are marginalized social groups in every society and culture. Women, children, older people, and people with disabilities are among marginalized groups across the world. The nature and level of marginalization varies from society to society as a result of cultural diversity. Religious, ethnic, and racial minorities are also among social groups marginalized in different societies and cultures. Crafts workers such as tanners, potters, and ironsmiths are marginalized in many parts of Ethiopia.

What is vulnerability? Vulnerability refers to the state of being exposed to physical or emotional injuries. Vulnerable groups are people exposed to possibilities of attack, harms or mistreatment. As a result, vulnerable persons/groups need special attention, protection and support. For example, children and people with disabilities need special support and protection as they are exposed to risks and neglect because of their age and disabilities. Universities have introduced special needs education for students with disabilities to give them special support.

Minority groups: The phrase 'minority group' refers to a small group of people within a community, region, or country. In most cases, minority groups are different from the majority population in terms of race, religion, ethnicity, and language. For example, black Americans are minorities in the United States of America. Christians could be minorities in a Muslim majority country. Muslims can be minorities in a predominantly Hindu society. Hence, minority groups can be ethnic minorities, religious minorities, or racial minorities in a given community, region of country. There are different forms of marginalization. In this chapter we will discuss issues related to occupational, age and gender-based marginalization.

Reflect on the following questions

What kind of marginalization do you observe in your social environment?

Who are the most marginalized groups?

What are the major causes for the marginalization of those groups of people?

4.2 Gender-based marginalization

Gender inequality involves discrimination on a group of people based on their gender. Gender inequality mainly arises from socio-cultural norms. The manifestations of gender inequality varies from culture to culture. Girls and women face negative discrimination in societies across the world. Women are exposed to social and economic inequalities involving unfair distribution of wealth, income and job opportunities.

Gender-based marginalization is a global problem. It involves exclusion of girls and women from a wide range of opportunities and social services. Gender disparities in education is a good example. Girls in developing countries, especially those who live in remote and rural areas, are excluded from formal education. The enrollment of girls in higher education is much lower than that of boys. Women do not enjoy equal employment opportunities. They

do not have equal rights in terms of property ownership and inheritance. Women and girls are also vulnerable to gender-based violence such as rape, early/child marriage, abduction/forced marriage, domestic violence and female genital cutting/mutilation.

There are some customary practices that affect the health and wellbeing of girls and women. These practices collectively are called harmful traditional practices (HTPs). We will discuss two examples: early/child marriage and female circumcision, also called female genital cutting/mutilation. Let us begin with female genital cutting, which is widely practiced in most regions of Ethiopia.

Female genital cutting

Female genital cutting (FGC) is practiced in 28 countries in western, northern and eastern Africa. The prevalence of FGC is very high in Somali (98%)[1], Djibouti (93%), Egypt (87%), Sudan (87%), and Eritrea (83%). Ethiopia is one of the high prevalence countries in Africa. According to recent reports, 65% of girls and women in 15 to 49 years age category are circumcised (UNFPA & UNICEF, 2017).

According to Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey report, the prevalence of FGC in Ethiopia varied from region to region. Somali (99%), Afar (91%), and Harari (84%) are the three regions with very high prevalence of the practice. The prevalence of FGC in Oromia (76%), Benishangul-Gumuz (63%), Amhara (62%) and Southern, Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) regional states (62%) is also high. The prevalence of the practice in also high in big cities such as Addis Ababa (54%) and Dire Dawa (79%). The two regions with relatively low FGC prevalence are Tigray (24%) and Gambella (33%).

Health impacts of female genital cutting

There are four major types of FGC. They are Type I (clitoridectomy), Type II (excision), Type III (infibulation), and Type IV (all the rest). The first three types of FGC are practiced in Ethiopia. According to the Ethiopian demographic and health survey (EDHS 2016), 3% of circumcised women (age 15-49) experienced the type of circumcision that involves cutting without flesh removing (clitoridectomy), 7% experienced sewn closed type (infibulation),

[1] Figures show the percentage of girls and women (aged 15 to 49 years) who have undergone female genital cutting.

and 73% experienced cut and flesh removed (excision). Harms of FGC vary because the types of FGC practiced in different regions and cultural settings are different. Type III (also called infibulation or phraonic) is the most severe form of FGC. This type of FGC is widely practiced in the Somali, Afar, and Harari regions. Short term and long term implications for the health of girls and women including severe bleeding, infections, pain during sexual intercourse, delivery complications, and fistula. The impacts also include psychological trauma.

Factors that encourage female genital cutting

The prevalence of FGC has been declining in Ethiopia. However, it is still practiced in most of the regions in the country. Why do people practice FGC? The practice is sustained for some reasons: 1) people consider it as an integral part of their culture; and 2) people believe that the practice has some benefits. The following are some of the beliefs related to the practice:

- FGC is considered as a process of purifying girls. In some cultures uncircumcised girls/women are considered as impure. According to local beliefs, marriage to uncircumcised girls would bring misfortunes such as illness, infertility, and conflict. Hence, girls must be circumcised to be clean and ready for marriage
- Uncircumcised girls would be disobedient, powerful and ill-mannered. In some parts of Ethiopia, people believe that uncircumcised girls tend to destroy household utensils.
- There is a widely held belief that uncircumcised girls are promiscuous because they have high sexual drive. Some people believe that marriage to uncircumcised girls/women would not be stable and long-lasting.
- FGC is also considered as a means of preserving girls' virginity, which is considered as a precondition for marriage in some cultures.

Reflect on the following questions

Do you think that beliefs related to FGC are acceptable?

Do you accept the benefits of FGC outlined above?

What shall be done to accelerate the abandonment of FGC?

Female genital cutting is sustained is enforced by social expectations and norms. Girls and parents who decide to abandon the practice would be subject to social sanctions. The following are examples:

- Social exclusion and marginalization: Community members would exclude uncut girls and women from a wide range of social relations and interactions.
- Gossip and insult: community members, including peer groups, boys, women and men, put pressure on uncircumcised girls and their parents through gossiping and insulting.
- In some parts of Ethiopia, men do not marry uncircumcised girls. As a result, uncircumcised girls are excluded from marriage opportunities and love relationships.
- In some parts of the country, people do not eat food cooked by uncircumcised girls. Uncircumcised girls/women are not also allowed to join other people for prayer. This is because uncut girls are labeled as impure.

	Read and Discuss ☙ What are the cultural justifications for practicing FGC in different regions and cultural settings in Ethiopia? ☙ Do you think that FGC has negative impacts on health and wellbeing of girls and women? If so what are the harms caused by the practice? ☙ Propose culturally appropriate/sensitive solutions to the problems caused by FGC.

4.3 Marginalized occupational groups

According to anthropological findings, there are occupational marginalized groups in many parts of Ethiopia. The following are marginalized occupational groups in our country: tanners, potters, weavers and ironsmiths. These craft-workers have different names in

different parts of the country. Craft-workers such as potters and tanners are considered as impure and excluded from social interactions, ownership of economic resources (e.g., land), and participation in associations and celebrations.

As noted above, marginalized occupation groups are people engaged in craftworks such as pottery, tannery, and iron works. Craft-workers in Ethiopia produce several articles such as traditional hand-woven clothes, household utensils, and farm tools. Crafts workers lead a life of paradoxes. They have important contributions to their communities; however, they are marginalized by the dominant and majority groups. For examples, weavers produce cultural clothes highly demanded by thousands and millions of people. Many people use cultural clothes during annual celebrations, religious holidays, weddings, culture days, and mourning. The demand of cultural dresses has been increasing in the last three decades. People dress cultural clothes in different occasions such as cultural festivals, days of nations and nationalities, and religious celebrations. Despite their contributions, weavers are marginalized from the wider society.

	Reading A book edited by Dena Freeman and Alula Pankhurst (2001) is an important reading material on marginalized occupational groups in Ethiopia. The title of the book is '*Marginalized Minorities of Craft-workers and Hunters in Southern Ethiopia'.* The book focuses on marginalized occupational groups in 14 ethnic/cultural groups including the Gurage, Kambata, Kafa, Dawro, Gamo, Sidama and Konso. Read a few chapters and discuss some of the issues among your classmates or during class discussion.

Ironsmiths are among occupational groups marginalized in many cultural setting in Ethiopia. Ironsmiths make and repair iron articles without using machines. They contribute a lot especially in rural areas. Ironsmiths serve rural communities by producing farming tools such as plough shares, sickles, and hoes. Ethiopia families widely use household utensils (e.g., knives and axes) made by ironsmiths. Tanners make leather products that serve

community members. Potters produce pottery articles essential for food processing and serving and fetching water. Despite their contributions, these craft-workers are considered inferior and marginalized from wide areas of social interactions.

Craft-workers such as potters and weavers have a big contributions to their respective communities; however, they are excluded and mistreated by the majority groups.

- hat do you think the reason for the marginalization of these occupational groups?
- hat is the impact of this practice to the development of the crafts industry in Ethiopia?
- hat solution do you suggest to eradicate the marginalization of crafts workers and protect their rights?

Write your answer and read it in the class.

Marginalization of despised occupational groups is manifested in many ways in different parts of Ethiopia. Dena Freeman and Alula Pankhurst (2001), well-known anthropologists, identified different forms of marginalization targeting minority occupational groups. Some of them are summarized in the following table.

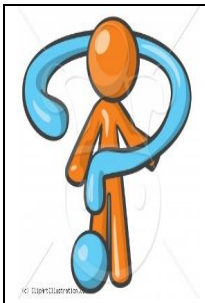
Types and manifestations of marginalization of craft-workers

Type of marginalization	Manifestations of marginalization
Spatial marginalization	- Craft-workers settle/live on the outskirts of villages, near to forests, on poor land, around steep slopes. - They are segregated at market places (they sell their goods at the outskirts of markets). - When they walk along the road, they are expected to give way for others and walk on the lower side of the road.
Economic marginalization	- Craft-workers are excluded from certain economic activities including production and exchanges. In some cultures they are not allowed to cultivate crops. - They have a limited access to land and land ownership.
Social marginalization	- Craft-workers are excluded from intermarriage, they do not share burial places with others; they are excluded from membership of associations such as iddirs. - When marginalized groups are allowed to participate in social events, they must sit on the floor separately-sometimes outside the house or

	near the door.
Cultural marginalization	Cultural marginalization is manifested in negative stereotyping such as the following: ☙ Occupational minorities are labelled as impure and polluting; they are accused of eating animals that have died without being slaughtered; ☙ Occupational minorities are also considered unreliable, lacking morality, respect and shame.

Source: Alula Pankhurst and Getachew Assefa (2008)

The above table summarizes forms of marginalization targeting occupational minorities such as potters, tanners, and ironsmiths. Manifestations of economic, spatial, social and cultural marginalization are outlined to illustrate the level of discrimination against craft-workers. These are examples. You may find other forms of marginalization when you read the literature on this issue. There are different arguments related to this issue. Discuss the following issues.



The marginalization of craft-workers is an issue of human rights. Provide your critical reflection on the following questions.

- ☙ How do you evaluate the negative stereotypes against craft-workers?
- ☙ What are the short and long-term impacts of such stereotypes targeting occupation minorities?
- ☙ Some people argue that marginalization of craft-workers is one of the factors that hinders the development of craftworks and small scale manufacturing in Ethiopia. Do you agree? If you do what are your reasons?

4.4 Age-based vulnerability

What is age-based vulnerability? Age-based vulnerability is susceptibility of people, especially children and older people, to different forms of attack, physical injuries and emotional harms. For example, children and older people (people aged 60 and above) are exposed to possibilities of attack, harm and mistreatment because of their age. As a result, vulnerable persons/groups need special attention, protection and support. In this section, we discuss some example related to children and older people.

4.4.1 Children: Discrimination/vulnerability

Children are among vulnerable groups exposed to harm because of their age. Both boys and girls are exposed to some harm and abuse in the hands of older people. However, girls are exposed to double marginalization and discrimination because of the gender. Child girls are exposed to various kinds of harm before they reach at the age of maturity. As discussed earlier in this chapter, girls are exposed to HTPs such as female genital cutting. Minor girls are also exposed to early/child marriage in many parts of Ethiopia.

Early/child marriage: Early marriage refers to marriage which involves girls below the age of 18. The prevalence of early marriage is declining in Ethiopia and other African countries. However, it is still widely practiced in different regions of Ethiopia. According to international human rights conventions, early marriage is regarded as violation of the rights of the child. Early marriage has the following major harmful consequences:

- Young girls enter into marital relation when they are too young to give their consent to get married.
- Early marriage inhibits girls' personal development; it hinders girls' chance to education and future professional development.
- Early marriage exposes young girls to sexual abuse by their older husbands.
- Early marriage leads to early pregnancies, which increases risks of diseases and complications during delivery, fistula, and death of the mother or child.

Child marriage is an illegal practice according to the Criminal Code of Ethiopia. Despite this legal restrictions, however, early marriage is still practiced in different regions of the country.

	Facts about early marriage in Ethiopia ☙ Forty percent of all women who are in their early twenties married before the age of 18. ☙ Eight per cent of girls aged 15-19 were married before they reach at the age of 15.

	☙ Uneducated girls, girls from poor family, and girls living in rural areas more likely marry earlier that rich-family, urban and educated girls (Harper et al, 2018, page 44). Read more on early marriage and its implications for the wellbeing of girls.

Factors encouraging early marriage: According to study findings, there are various factors that drive early marriage. Social norms and economic factors are the two major drivers of the practice.

Social norms: Social norms contribute a lot for the continuation of early marriage in many parts of the world. **C**hastity of girls is one of the social norms that influence parents and relatives to protecting girls from pre-marital sex. The value attached to virginity is another driver of early marriage. Girl's reputation and family social status are associated with sexual purity of girls. Parents incline to marry off their daughter before the girl reach at the stage of poverty to avoid the possibility of pre-marital sex and love affair. Community members influence unmarried teen-age girls to get married as early as possible. They do this through social pressure including insulting unmarried young girls. *Komoker,* an Amharic term*,* is the widely used insult to ridicule girls considered to be late to get married.

Economic factors are among the major factors that drive child marriage. In many areas of Ethiopia marriage provides economic security for young girls. Hence, parents, in some cases girls, support early marriage for economic benefits such as access to land and other resources. Parents' desire to get a good husband for their daughter is also another reason.

4.4.2 Marginalization of older persons

We have discussed age-based marginalization considering the vulnerability of children. Age-based marginalization also affects older people. The phrase 'older people' refers to adults with the age of 60 and above. The number of older people is increasing globally. According to the estimation of the United Nations (2009), the number of older people will increase to

2 billion by 2050. Eighty percent of the 2 billion older persons would live in low and middle-income countries. This means Africa would have a large number of older adults after 30 years. Ethiopia, the second populous country in Africa, would also have millions of older persons after three decades.

Discuss the impacts of demographic changes

- What do you think about this demographic change? What are the potential challenges of an increasing population of older people?
- Ethiopia currently has large number of younger people. What are the advantages and challenges of having large population of young people in countries like Ethiopia?

People's attitude towards older persons is changing over time in Ethiopia and all over the world. Older men and women have been respected across Ethiopian cultures. Older persons have been considered as custodians of tradition, culture, and history. The role of older persons crucial in mentoring younger people, resolving disputes, and restoring peace across Ethiopian cultures. Situations are changing as family structures and living patterns are changing over time. Rural-urban migration, changes in values and life style, education and new employment opportunities lead to so many changes. Care and support for older people tend to decline as younger people migrate to urban areas and exposed to economic pressure and new life styles.

Ageism is a widely observed social problem in the world. Ageism refer to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people based on their age. Older women and men enjoyed a certain level of support and respected in the past. This was true in many cultures of Ethiopia in the past. Things have been changing in recent times. Older people are facing various problems as a result of modernization, globalization, and urbanization. Older people are exposed to social exclusion because of their lower social and economic status. In most cases, older people are excluded from social, cultural, political and economic interactions in their communities. Older persons are marginalized because they are considered as social

burden rather than social assets. Communities do not provide older persons with opportunities to contribute to their communities.

Discuss changes related to older people

- What kind of challenges do older men and women face in Ethiopia? Do the challenges vary in rural and urban areas?
- Do you think that respect for older people is declining over time?
- What kind of change do you observe social and economic status of older people in the community you come from?

4.5. Religious and ethnic minorities

We have discussed the marginalization of different social and occupational groups in different socio-cultural contexts. Religious and ethnic minorities groups also face different forms of marginalization. There are several examples of marginalization and discrimination targeting religious and ethnic minorities in the world. Let us mention two examples.

- The Jewish people suffered from discrimination and persecution in different parts of the world. They were targets of extermination in Germany and other Western European countries because of their identity.
- Muslim Rohingyas are among the most marginalized and persecuted people in the world. According to Abdu Hasnat Milton et al (2017), the Rohingya are 'one of the most ill-treated and persecuted refugee groups in the world'. In recent years, more than half-a-million Rohingyas fled from their homes in Nyanmar to neighboring countries such as Bangladesh.As people living in refugee camps, the Rohingyas are vulnerable to problems such as malnutrition and physical and sexual abuse.

These are among the widely known examples of discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities. The problem is not limited to specific areas, regions or countries. Although the level of the problem varies in different contexts, religious and ethnic minorities face different forms of discrimination in many parts of the world.

4.6. Human right approaches and inclusiveness: Anthropological perspectives

All forms of marginalization and discrimination against vulnerable and minority groups contradict the principles of human rights. The major human rights conventions denounce discrimination against women, children, people with disability, older people and other minority and vulnerable groups. People with disabilities have the right to inclusive services and equal opportunities. The human rights of women and girls include right to be free from harmful traditional practices such as forced marriage, early marriage, and female genital cutting. Any form of discrimination, exclusion, and gender-based violence also violate the human rights girls and women.

Explore the human rights treaties

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is a human rights treaty approved by the United Nations in 1989. The Convention has 41 articles focusing on the survival rights, development rights, protection rights and participation rights.

Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is also a human rights treaty endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979.

Read the two conventions and outlines articles focusing on exclusion and discrimination against children and women.

Anthropology appreciates cultural diversity and commonality. Do you remember the meaning of cultural relativism? It is one of the guiding principles in social anthropology. It is about the importance of understanding the values, norms, customs and practices of a particular culture in its own context. This requires appreciating the life styles of others including their dressing styles, food habits, beliefs, rituals and celebrations. It also requires avoiding value judgments such as saying 'this custom is backward or primitive'. This does not mean that we need to appreciate every custom and practice. Anthropologists do not support/appreciate cultural practices that violate the rights and wellbeing of individuals and

groups. For example, anthropologists do not support the following harmful practices in the name of cultural relativism:

- Female genital cutting (FGC): Anthropologists do not support FGC for practical reasons: FGC violates the rights of girls to physical integrity. It has short and long term consequences for the health of girls and women.
- Early/child marriage: Anthropologists do not support early marriage for similar reasons: Early marriage violates the rights of young girls to make decision about their future. It destroys their chance to education, and personal and professional development. Early marriage negatively affects their physical and psychological wellbeing.

Dear Students:

We are finalizing this unit. Please reflect on the following issues before you move on to the next unit: (1) how do you understand cultural relativism? (2) Do we need to support/appreciate harmful customary practices in the name of cultural relativism?

4.7. Unit Summary

In this Unit, we have discussed issues related to marginalization of different groups including gender, age, religious and ethnic groups. It also outlined the marginalization of occupational groups such as potters, tanners and weavers in different cultural settings in Ethiopia. The Unit also dealt with the human rights approach and the importance of inclusive approaches to protect the rights of marginalized, vulnerable and minority groups. In the next you will learn about theories of inter-ethnic relations and multiculturalism.

4.8. Assessment Techniques

The assessment methods to be used in this unit include; quiz, group assignment, individual assignments, administering different examinations and mandatory reading assignments.

4.9 Facilities Required:

White/Blackboard, LCD/Power Point Presentations, Whiteboard Markers …. etc.

Suggested Reading Materials

Abdu Hasnat et al (2017). Trapped in Statelessness: Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 14, 942, p. 1-8.

Central Statistical Agency (CSA) [Ethiopia] and ICF. (2016). Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: CSA and ICF.

Freeman D. and Pankhurst, A. (Eds.) Living on the Edge: Marginalized Minorities of Craft-workers and Hunters in Southern Ethiopia. Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Addis Ababa University.

Harper, C.; Jones, N.; Ghimire, A.; Marcus, R.; and Bantebya, G. K (Eds.). 2018. Empowering Adolescent Girls in Developing Countries: Gebder Justice and Norm Change. New York: Routledge.

Freeman D. and Pankhurst, A. (Eds.) Living on the Edge: Marginalized Minorities of Craft-workers and Hunters in Southern Ethiopia. Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Addis Ababa University.

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Unit Five

5. Identity, Inter-Ethnic Relations and Multiculturalism in Ethiopia

Study Hours: 8 face-to-face hours

Dear Learners!

Welcome to unit five. This unit deals with the social world of identity, ethnicity, race, inter-ethnic relations and multiculturalism. Ethnicity, race, and nationality pose one of the greatest challenges to the survival of humankind in the 21stc, for they touch the very core of the social fabric, personal identity and individuality; they influence how we think of others and ourselves; they play a role in our morality and political behavior; and they affect our everyday existence in significant ways. Indeed, they seem to affect most things we do and think, from the most mundane ways in which we behave to the dearest beliefs we hold about ourselves and others. Such identities have as much political, sociological and economic salience as they ever had.

To this end, it is hoped that you will benefit a lot out of this unit in terms understanding the process of social categorization and identification, as you will rigorously discuss about how ethnic difference is socially constructed, organized and negotiated –in context of diversity. And, how ethnic identification, or indeed any kinds of identification, works, and made socially relevant and the relationship of ethnicity to other analogues or homologues identifications such as race and national identity.

In this unit therefore, you will be introduced to concepts like ethnicity and race as both a social construct as well as a constituent feature of people's identities and lived experiences, their nature and characteristics and the active role they play in the social, economic and political life of people. Drawing upon theoretical discourses, the unit will also provide you insights on the ways in which ethnic identity and ethnic relations are defined and perceived by people, how particular world-views are being maintained, or contested and how societies use these constructions for, among other things, nation-building, economic development, resources competition and group mobilization for different materialistic and political ends. In addition, the various discussions in the unit incorporate a contextual discussion of ethnicity and multiculturalism in Ethiopia.

In due course, students are required to assume active role in class activities and discussions; sharing of experiences, undertaking different debates and arguments and take-home assignments.

Contents of the Unit:

The major topics that we are about to uncover in this part of the module include: the elaboration and detailed problematization of the concepts of ethnicity, identity, ethnic identity as essentially illusive concepts in need of further explications. In due course, all related concepts such as ethnic groups, ethnic boundaries, race etc. will be explored. The most prominent theoretical positions concerning these issues are also addressed in more broader terms with their critics and counter critics.

Unit learning outcomes:

Up on the successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Define 'ethnicity' and differentiate it from other cognate identifications and group categorization such as race and nation;
- Understand the basics of ethnic identity and ethnic group –as the outcome of a dialectical process of internal and external definition;
- Develop greater understanding over the often-contested nature of culture, identity, ethnicity and race;
- Understand lack of sound biological or scientific basis for use of race in analytical sense to group identification and categorization;
- Identify the major theories of ethnicity and describe their main arguments regarding the nature, characteristics and silent feature of ethnicity;
- Explain the different aspects and patterns of ethnic relations and understand how ethnic groups maintain their ethnic boundary (identity) while interacting with others;
- Critique ethnicity as a dynamic aspect of social organization and ethnic boundaries as flexible and constantly reproduced through social interaction;
- Analyze how ethnic and other cognate identifications are socially constructed and manipulated as a powerful tool for economic and political ends.

5.1. Identity, Ethnicity and Race: *Identification and Social Categorization*

Introduction

Dear learners, welcome to this section. This section mainly deals with the social construction of identity, and process of group identification, categorization and its implication for people lives. It will shed some light on concrete issues of identity, ethnicity, and race and how ethnic and racial identification, or indeed any kind of identification, work in the process of group identification and social categorization. In this way, the section will offer a set of conceptual tools, which go far beyond the immediate interpretation of day-to-day politics in their applicability.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- How do you describe who you are (your identity)?
- What are the ways we tell for others who we are?
- Why do people are obsessed with their identity?
- What's the point of this obsession with who we are?

All animals recognize differences between "self" and "other". In human societies, these differences take on enormous significance, partly because humans are so individualistic - rather than being clone-like automatons, humans have individual personalities. Society validates that individualism by giving infants unique names. Those names also keep track of who's related to whom, sometimes for generations back into the past. What's the point of this obsession with who we are? Why am I named "X" rather than "#26-A," and why do we go further, adding categorical identifiers such as "ethnic X" or "race Z" to our identifications?

To understand themselves as a species, humans have to also understand themselves as individuals within networks of other individuals. This unit explores identity, individual and collective; and how societies worldwide manage to define and categorically identify different kinds of identities, such as ethnic, racial and national identity. Brubaker (2004), inculcate that identity more generally is not real, either, in the sense that it is not a 'thing' that people can be said to have or to be. Instead, we should talk about ongoing and open-

ended processes of identification. By this logic, identity does not impel people to do anything; it is, rather, people who engage in identification.

It is certainly true, for instance, that whatever reality can be attributed to groups depends on people thinking that groups exist and that they belong to them. It is also certainly true that identity depends on processes of identification and does not determine, in any mechanistic or causal sense, what individuals do (Jenkins, 2008).

Throughout the discussions that will come under the subsequent subtopics, this section will explore the ways in which ethnic categories and relations are being defined and perceived by people; how people talk and think about their own group as well as other groups, and how particular world-views are being maintained or contested. Moreover, by exploring both differences and similarities between ethnic phenomena, it thereby provides a nuanced and complex vision of ethnicity, process of ethnic and other identity constructions and group categorization in the contemporary world.

5.1.1. Ethnicity: *What's in a name?*

Introduction

This section provides detail conceptual discussion and discourses on ethnicity and the derivate concepts of ethnic group and ethnic identity by contextualizing within the broader social process of identification and group categorization. Through contextual discussion of social life at the level of everyday interaction, which is the locus where ethnicity is created and re-created, it provides some insights on how ethnicity emerges and is made relevant through ongoing social situations and encounters, and through people's ways of coping with the demands and challenges of life.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What do people mean when they talk about ethnicity?
- Why does currently, ethnic studies and ethnic issues dominate public and academic discourses?
- Why does ethnicity seem to matter to some people(s) – in

some situations – but not to others?

- Why and when does ethnicity really matter?

After the end of the second world war, words like “ethnicity”, “ethnic groups” “ethnic conflict” and “nationalism” have become quite common terms in the English language, and they keep cropping up in the press, in TV news, in political programmes and in casual conversations. There has been a parallel development in the social sciences with a growing interest in such studies. During the 1980s and early 1990s, we have witnessed an explosion in the growth of scholarly publications on ethnicity, ethnic phenomenon and nationalism across different disciplines, within social sciences.

An important reason for the current academic interest in ethnicity and nationalism is the fact that such phenomena have become so visible in many societies that it has become impossible to ignore them. In the early twentieth century, many social theorists held that ethnicity and nationalism would decrease in importance and eventually vanish as a result of modernization, industrialization and individualism. This never came about. On the contrary, ethnicity and nationalism have grown in political importance in the world, particularly since the ***Second World War***.

Thirty-five of the thirty-seven major armed conflicts in the world in 1991 were internal conflicts, and most of them - from Sri Lanka to Northern Ireland - could plausibly be described as ethnic conflicts. In addition to violent ethnic movements, there are also many important non-violent ethnic movements, such as the *Québecois* independence movement in Canada. In many parts of the world, further, nation-building - the creation of political cohesion and national identity in former colonies - is high on the political agenda.

Ethnic and national identities also become strongly pertinent following the continuous influx of labour migrants and refugees to Europe and North America, which has led to the establishment of new, permanent ethnic minorities in these areas. During the same period, indigenous populations (such as Inuits& Sami) have organized themselves politically, and demand that their ethnic identities and territorial entitlements should be recognized by the

State. Finally, the political turbulence in Europe has moved issues of ethnic and national identities to the forefront of political life.

At one extreme of the continent, the erstwhile Soviet Union has split into over a dozen ethnically based states. With the disappearance of the strong Socialist state in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, issues of nationhood and minority problems are emerging with unprecedented force. On the other extreme of the continent, the situation seems to be the opposite, as the nation-states of Western Europe are moving towards a closer economic, political and possibly cultural integration. But here, too, national and ethnic identities have become important issues in recent years. Many people fear the loss of their national or ethnic identity as a result of a tight European integration, whereas others consider the possibilities for a pan-European identity to replace the ethnic and national ones. The process reveled how personal identities are intimately linked with political processes and that social identities, e.g. as Danes or Europeans, are not given once, and for all, but are negotiated over. Both of these insights are crucial to the study of ethnicity. The same is true for Ethiopia, where issue of ethnic and national identities is contested and ethnicity has become the official organizing principle of the state since 1991.

5.1.2. Ethnicity – A Short Historical Overview

Dear learners, in this section, the history and meanings of 'ethnicity' will be explored. By making a short historical overview on the use of the term, it will show how the term 'ethnicity' have been used in various ways to refer to different human 'groupings' and how this is opened a door for the elasticity and ambiguity of its conceptual meaning. By exploring different scholarly works and arguments, it will also attempt to define and conceptualize the concept.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What is the root word (etymological origin & meaning) of the term 'ethnicity'? What's its meaning?
- How do terms like' ethnicity and ethnic' have historically been

used and applied at different times and spaces?

The study of ethnicity and ethnic relations has in recent years come to play a central role in the social sciences, to a large extent replacing *class structure* and *class conflict* as a central focus of attention. This has occurred on an interdisciplinary basis involving social anthropology, sociology, political theory, political philosophy and history (Erikson, 2002). In this regard, the academic and popular use of the term 'ethnicity' is fairly, modern. According to John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (1996), the term "ethnicity" is relatively new, first appearing in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1953.

5.1.3. The term itself –Ethnicity

The English origin of the term 'ethnicity' is connected to the term "ethnic,"–which is much older and has been in use since the Middle Ages. The word is derived from the Greek term '*ethnos'* (which in turn, derived from the Latin word '*ethnikos'*), which literally means "*a group of people bound together by the same manners, customs or other distinctive features*" (Vanderwerf et al., 2009). In the context of ancient Greek, the term refers to a collectivity of humans lived and acted together -which is typically translated today as 'people' or 'nation' (not political unit per say, but group of people with shared communality) (Jenkins, 1997). Contrary to its literal meaning however, ancient Greeks were using the term '*ethnos'* in practice to refer to *non-Hellenic*, people who are non-Greek and considered as second-class peoples. Likewise, in early England, it used to refer to someone who was *neither Christian* nor *Jewish* (to refer to heathen or pagan).

In its modern sense, it was only after the end of II World War that the term widely adopted and begins to use. Before World War II, while the term "tribe" was the term of choice for "pre-modern" societies and the term "race" was used to refer modern societies (Jenkins, 2001). Due to the close link between the term "race" and Nazi ideology, after the end of II WW, the term "ethnic" gradually replaced "race" within both the North American tradition and the European tradition. The North American tradition adopted 'ethnic' as a substitute

for ***minority groups*** within a larger society of the nation-state (referring to the Jews, Italians, Irish and other people considered inferior to the dominant group of largely British descent). The European tradition regularly opted to use 'ethnic group' as a synonym for ***nationhood,*** defined historically by descent or territory (Vanderwerf et al., 2009:5). At the same time both traditions shared a joint aim to replace what had become a popular, but heavily compromised (due to the Nazi experiment), concept of 'race'.

Nevertheless, popular discourses, in both Europe and North America, have '*racialized*' the concept of ethnicity, that is 'race' was largely preserved (in its quasi-biological sense) and has only now been used interchangeably with 'ethnicity'.

Furthermore, the collapse of the colonial world in the 1950s and 1960s has brought even more confusion on questions of '*race'*, '*culture*' and '*ethnicity'*. The homelands of former European colonizers have become populated with new, post-colonial immigrants, who are visibly different. Following the consolidation of North American popular and legislative discourse these groups have also become defined as '***ethnic'***, thus, simultaneously preserving old definitions of *historical ethnicity by descent or territory* (i.e., Welsh, Flamans, Walloons, etc.) while adding the new definition of ethnicity as an ***immigrant minority*** (i.e., Pakistani, West Indian, Sri Lankan, etc.). As Jack David Eller put it, "some of the most perplexing problems arise from the vagueness of the term and phenomenon called ethnicity and from its indefinite and ever-expanding domain…ethnicity is "vague, elusive and expansive" (Eller, 1999).

The fall of communism and the breakup of the Soviet-style federations along 'ethnic' lines and the emergence of 'ethnic cleansing' policies in the Balkans and the Caucasus have further complicated these definitional issues.

With the wars on former Yugoslav soil, extensive and influential mass media coverage of '*ethnic conflict*' has seen the term '*ethnic*' degenerate into a synonym for *tribal, primitive, barbaric* and *backward*.

Finally, the ever-increasing influx of asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants to Western Europe, North America and Australia, who do not necessarily express visible or significant physical, cultural or religious differences to their hosts, together with their uncertain legal status (i.e., waiting for a decision on asylum), has relegated the term '*ethnic*'

to a quasi-legislative domain. In this context, the term '*ethnicity*' often refers again to *non-citizens* who inhabit '*our land*', just as it did in the days of ancient Greece and Judea; that is, to *second-class* peoples.

What is obvious from this short history of the term is the fact that 'ethnicity' contains a multiplicity of meanings. Such a plasticity and ambiguity of the concept allows for deep misunderstandings as well as political misuses. As Jack David Eller put it, "some of the most perplexing problems arise from the vagueness of the term and phenomenon called ethnicity and from its indefinite and ever-expanding domain (Eller, 1999:8). In other words, ethnicity is "vague, elusive and expansive". Hence, in the following section attempts will be made to conceptualize ethnicity and its related concepts of ethnic group and ethnic identity from different scholarly viewpoints.

5.2. Conceptualizing Ethnicity –*What's it?*

Quite suddenly, with little comment or ceremony, ethnicity has achieved a nomni present status. Even a brief glance through titles of books and monographs over the past few years indicates a steadily accelerating acceptance and application of the terms "ethnicity" and "ethnic" to refer to what was before often subsumed under 'culture', 'cultural', or 'tribal'. New journals have appeared using the terms in their titles, and special programs of ethnic studies are showing up in university catalogs. Almost any cultural-social unit, indeed any term describing particular structures of continuing social relations, or sets of regularized events now can be referred to as an "ethnic" this or that. This can be seen in the proliferation of titles dealing with *ethnic groups, ethnic identity, ethnic boundaries, ethnic conflict, ethnic cooperation or competition, ethnic politics, ethnic stratification, ethnic integration, ethnic consciousness*, and so on. Name it and there is in all likelihood, someone who has written on it using "ethnic" or "ethnicity" qualifiers to describe his or her special approach to the topic.

Nevertheless, most scholars who uses "ethnicity" find definition either unnecessary or they are reluctant to provide general framework for the concept. Isajiw looked at 65 studies of ethnicity in anthropology, and sociology and found only 13 that defined the term. Writers

generally take it for granted that the term refers to *a set of named groupings,* singled out by the researcher as ethnic units. Membership in such group is then shown to have an effect on, or correlation with, one or more dependent variable(s). In this sense, ethnicity is widely used as a significant structural phenomenon. But that is hardly a definition.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- How do you define or conceptualize ethnicity?
- How do different scholars define and conceptualize ethnicity?

So it is important to be clear about what our subject – ethnicity - is and about what it is not. None of the founding fathers of anthropology and sociology - with the partial exception of Max Weber granted ethnicity much attention. Max Weber, in his work entitled "*Economy and Society*", first published in 1922 (1978:385-98), provided the early and influential sociological conceptions of ethnicity and ethnic group. According to Weber, an "ethnic group" is based on the belief in common descent shared by its members, extending beyond kinship, political solidarity vis-a-vis other groups, and common customs, language, religion, values, morality, and etiquette. In other words, ethnic groups are those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities or physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration. It does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists, but whether it is *believed* to exist.

Perhaps the most significant part of Weber's argument is that: "*ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere. On the other hand, it is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organized that inspires the belief in common ethnicity*" (1978: 389).

Weber seems to be suggesting that the belief in common ancestry is likely to be a consequence of collective political action rather than its cause; people come to see themselves as belonging together – coming from a common background – as a consequence of acting together. Collective interests thus, do not simply reflect or follow from similarities and differences between people; the pursuit of collective interests does, however,

encourage ethnic identification. In terms of collective action, this form of ethnic communality is a form of monopolistic social closure: it defines membership, eligibility and access.

Any cultural trait in common can provide a basis for and resources for ethnic closure: language, ritual, economic way of life, lifestyle more generally, and the division of laboure, are all likely possibilities in this respect. Shared language and ritual are particularly implicated in ethnicity: mutual intelligibility of the behavior of others is a fundamental pre-requisite for any group, as is the shared sense of what is 'correct and proper' which constitute individual 'honor and dignity'. By this token, an ethnic group is a particular form of status group. Finally, Weber argues that since the possibilities for collective action rooted in ethnicity are 'indefinite', the ethnic group, and its close relative the nation, cannot easily be precisely defined for sociological purposes.

As Weber (1968) emphasized, it is the effectiveness of social action and, above all, a political aspect of group action that 'inspires belief in common ethnicity' and transforms group membership into a political community. For Max Weber, an ethnic group is based, on the belief in common descent shared by its members because of similarities or physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization &migration. And "it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists", but believed to exist.

The next great contribution to our understanding of ethnicity comes from the influential works of the Norwegian anthropologist, named Frederik Barth (1969). Barth in an exceptionally brilliant *'Introduction'* part of a collection of scholarly work entitled "*Ethnic Groups and Boundaries"*(1969),where he was the editor,provided nothing short of a Copernican revolution in the study of ethnicity –in and outside anthropology. Hence, current anthropological conventional wisdom about ethnicity for the larger part is stems from this influential work of Barth. In his introduction to the collection of "*Ethnic Groups and Boundaries",* Barth (1969), outlined in detail a model of ethnicity.

Barth began with what actors believe or think: ***ascriptions and self-ascriptions***. A ***categorical ascription*** is an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background. To the

extent that ***actors use ethnic identities*** to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction, ***they form ethnic groups*** in this organizational sense.

Barth focused not upon the cultural characteristics of ethnic groups but upon relationships of cultural differentiation, and specifically upon contact between collectivities thus differentiated, 'us' and 'them' (Eriksen, 2002). Barth's emphasis was not so much upon the *substance* or *content* of ethnicity, what he called the 'cultural stuff', as upon the social processes, which produce and reproduce - which organize, if you like-boundaries of identification and differentiation between ethnic collectivities. As illustrated by Barth, it is important to recognize that although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account:

> we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. The features that are taken into account are not the sum of 'objective' differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant…not only do ecological variations mark and exaggerate differences; some cultural features are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored, and in some relationships radical differences are played down and denied (Barth, 1969: 14).

The cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies would seem analytically to be of two orders: (i) **overt signals or signs** - the diacritical features that people look for and exhibit to show identity, often such features as dress, language, house-form, or general style of life, and (ii) **basic value orientations**: the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged. Since belonging to an ethnic category implies being a certain kind of person, having that basic identity, it also implies a claim to be judged, and to judge oneself, by those standards that are relevant to that identity. Neither of these kinds of cultural 'contents' follows from a descriptive list of cultural features or cultural differences; one cannot predict from first principles which features will be emphasized and made organizationally relevant by the actors.

> Indeed, ***ethnic categories provide an organizational vessel*** that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different socio-cultural systems. They may be of great relevance to behavior, but they need not be; they may pervade all

social life, or they may be relevant only in limited sectors of activity. There is thus an obvious scope for ethnographic and comparative descriptions of different forms of ethnic organization. In its most general notion, for Barth, ethnicity is seen as a '***social organization of culture difference'***. But, the concept of 'culture', in Barth's model unless clearly explained found problematic one. This very ambiguity in the designation of ethnic groups in terms of cultural differences has been taken on as a challenge by anthropologists.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- Does this imply that ethnic groups ***don't necessarily*** have a ***distinctive culture***?
- Can two groups be culturally identical and yet constitute two different ethnic groups?
- What's the relationship between culture and ethnicity, after all?

These are complicated questions, but need to be answered. Before Barth, cultural difference was traditionally explained from the ***inside out*** – social groups possess different cultural characteristics, which make them unique and distinct (common language, lifestyle, descent, religion, physical markers, history, eating habits, etc.). Culture was perceived as something relatively or firmly stable, persistent and intact. Cultural difference was understood in terms of a group's property (i.e., to be *Gamo* is to be in possession of a distinct culture to that of the *Wolayita*). According to Frederik Barth (1969), Cultural difference per se does not create ethnic collectivities. It is the social contact with others that leads to definition and categorization of an 'us' and a 'them'; hence, cultural difference between two groups is not the decisive feature of ethnicity. Indeed, ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group.

Nonetheless, Barth turned the traditional understanding of cultural difference on its head. He defined and explained ethnicity from the ***outside in***: it is not the '*possession'* of cultural characteristics that makes social groups distinct but rather it is the *social interaction* with other groups that makes that difference possible, visible and socially meaningful. *Shared culture is, in this model, best understood as generated in and by processes of ethnic*

boundary maintenance, rather than the other way round: the production and reproduction of difference *vis-a-vis* external others is what creates the image of similarity internally, *vis-a-vis* each other. Barth and his collaborators ushered in an increasing awareness on the part of many anthropologists that 'culture' is a changing, variable and contingent property of interpersonal transactions, rather than a reified entity, somehow 'above' the fray of daily life, which produces the behaviour of individuals.

In Barth's own words: '***the critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses***' (1969: 15). The difference is created, developed and maintained only through interaction with others (i.e., Frenchness is created and becomes culturally and politically meaningful only through the encounter with Englishness, Germaness, Danishness, etc.). Hence, the focus in the study of ethnic difference has shifted from the study of its contents (i.e., the structure of the language, the form of the particular costumes, the nature of eating habits) to the study of cultural boundaries and social interaction. The boundaries to which we must give our attention are of course social boundaries, though they may have territorial counterparts. If a group maintains its identity when members interact with others, this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signaling membership and exclusion. Ethnic groups are not merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories; and the different ways in which they are maintained, not only by a once-and for-all recruitment but by continual expression and validation, need to be analyzed.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What is an ethnic boundary?
- Is an ethnic boundary physical/territorial boundary per se?
- Why, when and how do individuals and groups maintain ethnic boundaries?

In other words, ethnic boundaries are explained first and foremost as a product of social action. Cultural difference *per se* does not create ethnic collectivities: it is the social contact with others that leads to definition and categorization of an 'us' and a 'them'. At this point, we should note that contrary to a widespread commonsense view, cultural difference

between two groups is not the decisive feature of ethnicity. '*Group identities must always be defined in relation to that which they are not – in other words, in relation to non-members of the group'* (Eriksen, 1993: 10). Thus, in emphasizing boundaries between groups, and their production and reproduction, Barth immediately shifted the analytical center of gravity away from this or that settled, bounded group - or 'society' - and towards complex universes of relationships between groups and their members. In doing so, Barth emphasized that ethnic identity is generated, confirmed or transformed in the course of interaction and transaction between decision-making, strategizing individuals. Barth's work has transformed and shifted the study of ethnic difference from the study of ***cultural contents*** (language, religion, and customs) to the study of the ***interaction processes*** in which cultural characteristics are "picked up" as markers of differences in the interaction process. Cultural differences *per se* do not create ethnic collectivities: The social contact with others leads to the definition and categorization of an "us" and "them".

For instance, two distinctive, endogamous groups, say, somewhere in Ethiopia, may well have widely different languages, religious beliefs and even technologies, but that does not entail that there is an ethnic relationship between them. For ethnicity to come about, the groups must have a minimum of contact between them, and they must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. If these conditions are not fulfilled, there is no ethnicity, for ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group. Conversely, some groups may seem culturally similar, yet there can be a socially highly relevant (and even volatile) inter-ethnic relationship between them. This would be the case of the relationship between Serbs and Croats following the break-up of Yugoslavia, or of the tension between coastal Sami and Norwegians. There may also be considerable cultural variation within a group without ethnicity (Blom, 1969). Only in so far as cultural differences are perceived as being important, and are made socially relevant, do social relationships have an ethnic element. Ethnicity is an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as being culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction.

Furthermore, Barth's research established a foundation for understanding ethnicity in ***universalist*** rather than in ***particularist*** terms. Since culture and social groups emerge only through interaction with others, then ethnicity cannot be confined to minority groups only.

As Jenkins (1997) and Isajiw (2000) rightly argue, we cannot study minority ethnic groups without at the same time studying the majority ethnicity.

Generally speaking, Barth understanding of ethnicity has been central to pretty much all subsequent anthropologizing about ethnicity. Nevertheless, although his was arguably the most systematic model in depth and detail, the most securely grounded in wider theoretical arguments about social forms and social processes (e.g. Barth 1959, 1966, 1981), and has certainly been the most influential, Barth was not alone in establishing the current anthropological understanding of ethnicity.

Reflecting, on the one hand, the practical ethnographic concern with the everyday lives of real people, i.e., their 'actually existing' social relationships (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952:190), and on the other, the pursuit of *verstehen* ('understand-ing'), advocated by Weber and Simmel, Clifford Geertz has elegantly defined *ethnicity as the 'world of personal identity collectively ratified and publicly expressed' and 'socially ratified personal identity'* (1973:268, 309).

In spite of the difference in scholarly views of ethnicity among anthropologists, the 'basic social anthropological model of ethnicity' can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ *Ethnicity is a matter of cultural differentiation - although, to reiterate the main theme of social identity (Jenkins 2004), identification always involves a dialectical interplay between similarity and difference.*
- ✓ *Ethnicity is centrally a matter of shared meanings - what we conventionally call 'culture' - but is also produced and reproduced during interaction.*
- ✓ *Ethnicity is no more fixed or unchanging than the way of life of which it is an aspect, or the situations in which it is produced and reproduced.*
- ✓ *Ethnicity, as an identification, is collective and individual, externalized in social interaction and the categorization of others, and internalized in personal self-identification.*

Culture is conceived here partially in the traditional anthropological sense as involving a total way of life. The total way of life, however, does not necessarily mean simply a set of distinct everyday customs, although it may include these. Rather, it refers to a unique historical group experience. Culture is in essence a system of encoding such experience into

a set of symbolic patterns. It does not matter how different the elements of one culture are from another culture. ***A distinct culture is a manifestation of a group's distinct historical experience***. Its product is a sense of unique peoplehood. Ethnicity is not a single unified social phenomenon but a congeries, a "family," of related but analytically distinct phenomena. The foundations of ethnicity, the "markers" of ethnicity, the history of ethnicity, the aims and goals of ethnicity—these vary from case to case" (Eller, 1999).

The emphasis on culture as the point of departure for our understanding of the nature of ethnicity is not intended to mean that members of an ethnic group must always share one and the same culture to the exclusion of any other. Rather, it is intended to mean that persons who include themselves in an ethnicity would have a relation to a group who either now or at some point in the past has shared a unique culture.

5.3. Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity

Dear learners, this section will provide detail conceptual discussions about ethnic groups and ethnic identity, supplemented by empirical cases and various ethnographic examples. The concept of ethnic group is the most basic, from which the others are derivative. It refers to ethnicity as the collective phenomenon. Ethnic identity refers to ethnicity as an individually experienced phenomenon. Ethnicity itself is an abstract concept, which includes an implicit reference to both collective and individual aspects of the phenomenon.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What kind of social collectivity/community is the 'Ethnic group'?
- Are there specific rules/standards for a group to be an 'ethnic group'?
- Are ethnic groups a clearly demarcated and bounded, homogeneous collectivities or are they just collectivities, with only a shared sense or image of 'groupness'?

☙ How do you differentiate ethnic group from other social categories (like cultural group, racial group, nation etc)?

Ethnic Group

Notably, the term 'ethnic group' is also attached with various meanings as ethnicity. Scholars have been trying to conceptualize it from different perspectives and as a result, different definitions have been proposed to define 'ethnic group'. In this regard, earlier conception of ethnic group once again associated with Max Weber. According to Weber, an 'ethnic group' is based on the belief in common descent shared by its members, extending beyond kinship, political solidarity vis-a-vis other groups, and common customs, language, religion, values, morality, and etiquette (Weber, 1978). Anderson (1983), in his part described ethnic groups as "*an imagined community*" that possesses a "*character and quality*" (Anderson, 1983). Schermerhorn (1996), on the other hand, conceptualize ethnic group as a unit of population having unique characteristics in relation with others, binding with common language, myth of origin, and history of ethnic allegiance (1996).

Scholars mainly use it to explain contact and inter-relationship between groups. Taking Bateson's (1979) ideas, Eriksen states that since ethnic categories created out of the very contact between groups, dealing with ethnic groups in total isolation is as absurd as to speak of the sound from one hand clapping (Eriksen, 2002). In this regard, other scholars including F. Barth (1969), define ethnic groups as a self-defined group based on subjective factors and/or fundamental cultural values chosen by members from their past history or present existing conditions in which members are aware of-and-in contact with other ethnic groups. Barth (1969) further illustrated that, in a context of inter-ethnic interaction, group distinctiveness strongly depends on identification of self and ascription by others and members of a certain ethnic group will be evaluated in accordance with their 'performance' of the value standards and 'possession' of diacritical features designing the group against other. This entailed that, ethnic group are defined out of group interaction in which members of a group keep their social solidarity, identified themselves as belonging to specific group based on their subjective communalities (language, myth of origin, and shared cultural entities) that defined in reference with others (Abbink, 2004).

Ethnic groups constitute an identity as defined by outsiders who do not belong to the group but identify it as different from their own groups and by "insiders" who belong to the same group. This generally becomes the basis of mobilizing group's consciousness and solidarity and which in certain situation result in political activities (Kasfir, 1976).

By considering the various definitions provided to define ethnicity, Hutchinson and Smith's (1996) identified six main features that the definition of an ethnic group, predominantly consists. This includes;

1. *A common proper name, to identify and express the "essence" of the community;*
2. *A myth of common ancestry that includes the idea of common origin in time and place and that gives an ethnic group a sense of fictive kinship;*
3. *Shared historical memories, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration;*
4. *One or more elements of common culture, which need not be specified but normally, include religion, customs, and language;*
5. *A link with a homeland, not necessarily its physical occupation by the ethnic group, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples; and*
6. *A sense of solidarity on the part of at least some sections of the ethnic's population (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996:6-7).*

❖ **Ethnic Identity**

Definitions of ethnic identity vary according to the underlying theory embraced by researchers' and scholars' intent on resolving its conceptual meanings. The fact that there is no widely agreed upon definition of ethnic identity is indicative of the confusion surrounding the topic.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What is the basis of one's ethnic identity?
- Can you distinguish between the external and internal aspects of ethnic identity?

☙ What is the relationship of the individual to the ethnic?

Typically, ethnic identity is an affiliative construct, where an individual is viewed by themselves and by others as belonging to a particular ethnic or cultural group. An individual can choose to associate with a group especially if other choices are available (i.e., the person is of mixed ethnic or racial heritage). Affiliation can be influenced by racial, natal, symbolic, and cultural factors (Cheung, 1993). Racial factors involve the use of physiognomic and physical characteristics, natal factors refer to "homeland" (ancestral home) or origins of individuals, their parents and kin, and symbolic factors include those factors that typify or exemplify an ethnic group (e.g., holidays, foods, clothing, artifacts, etc.). Symbolic ethnic identity usually implies that individuals choose their identity, however, to some extent the cultural elements of the ethnic or racial group have a modest influence on their behavior (Kivisto & Nefzger, 1993).

On the individual level, ethnicity is ***a social-psychological process***, which gives an individual a sense of belonging and identity. It is, of course, one of a number of social phenomena, which produce a sense of identity. Ethnic identity can be defined as a manner in which persons, on account of their ethnic origin, locate themselves psychologically in relation to one or more social systems, and in which they perceive others as locating them in relation to those systems. By ethnic origin is meant either that a person has been socialized in an ethnic group or that his or her ancestors, real or symbolic, have been members of the group. The social systems may be one's ethnic community or society at large, or other ethnic communities and other societies or groups, or a combination of all these (Isajiw, 1990).

Locating oneself in relation to a community and society is not only a psychological phenomenon, but also ***a social phenomenon*** in the sense that the internal psychological states express themselves objectively in external behaviour patterns that come to be shared by others. Thus, individuals locate themselves in one or another community internally by states of mind and feelings, such as self-definitions or feelings of closeness, and externally by behaviour appropriate to these states of mind and feelings. Behaviour according to

cultural patterns is thus, an expression of identity and can be studied as an indication of its character.

We can thus distinguish external and internal aspects of ethnic identity. External aspects refer to observable behaviour, both cultural and social, such as (1), speaking an ethnic language, practicing ethnic traditions, (2), participation in ethnic personal networks, such as family and friendships, (3), participation in ethnic institutional organizations, such as churches, schools, enterprises, media (4), participation in ethnic voluntary associations, such as clubs, 'societies,' youth organizations and (5) participation in functions sponsored by ethnic organizations such as picnics, concerts, public lectures, rallies, dances.

The internal aspects of ethnic identity refer to images, ideas, attitudes, and feelings. These, of course, are interconnected with the external behaviour. But, it should not be assumed that, empirically, the two types are always dependent upon each other. Rather, they may vary independently, as for example, a third-generation person may retain a higher degree of internal than of external aspects. We can distinguish at least three types of internal aspects of identity: (1) cognitive, (2) moral, and (3) affective.

5.4. Race –The Social Construction of Racial Identity

Race is an elusive concept like ethnicity –used in a variety of contexts and meanings; sometimes interchangeably with ethnicity, where the relationship between the two concept remain complex. When first appeared, ethnicity/ethnic identity was used in synonym with race or racial identity, which complicated their relation. Moreover, the boundary between the two concepts is historically variable; what was 'racial' before 1945 may be more publicly acceptable as 'ethnic' today. This sub-section will provide a discussion about race/racial identity as a social construction of group categorization and identification, and come up with the significant distinctions among the races and the major difference between race/racial identity and ethnicity/ethnic identity. But, few words should be said initially about '***race'*** in order to stress that it has dubious descriptive value.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- Do you think racial categorization and identification have any scientific validity and objective basis?
- How do you entertain the claims about the existence of 'pure' race?
- Do you think the claims of some people/groups about superior & inferior racial groups have any scientific validity?
- What is a 'racial group', after all?

❖ **Racial Classification: A Short Historical Overview**

For some time, it was common to divide ***humanity into four main races***, which recognized both on the ***scientific*** and ***folk notions*** of the concept. In this regard, race was used both as a *system of human classification and social stratification* as follows:

- ***Europeaeus***: White; muscular; hair – long, flowing; eyes blue – Acute, inventive, gentle, and governed by laws.
- ***Americanus***: Reddish; erect; hair – black, straight, thick; wide nostrils – Obstinate, merry, free, and regulated by custom.
- ***Asiaticus***: Sallow (yellow); hair black; eyes dark – Haughty, avaricious, severe, and ruled by opinions.
- ***Africanus***: Black; hair –black, frizzled; skin silky; nose flat; lips tumid – Crafty, indolent, negligent, and governed by caprice or the will of their masters.

(***Source***: *Linneaus (1758), SystemaeNaturae*).

The *folk Notions* of the concept on the other hand, perceived race as *a non-overlapping and distinguishable categories of people*; which is fixed and/or natural (immutable) in its character. These, "folk" and "scientific" notions of race however, begin to diverge in the early 20th century. Modern genetics abandon race as a variable in biomedical research and tends not to speak of races, and this has two main reasons:

1. *There has always been so much interbreeding between human populations that it would be meaningless to talk of fixed boundaries between races.*

2. *The distribution of hereditary physical traits does not follow clear boundaries.* In other words, there is often greater variation within a "racial" group than there is systematic variation between two groups.

Genetic studies concerning human variation show that humans are > 99% genetically alike. Surprisingly, of the <1% variation *[~85% is found within any human population or group (such as town/village/tribal or ethnic group), ~10% is between any two groups, even those that are geographically close and ~5% is between geographically distant groups such as two towns/villages from different continents*] (J Marks, 1995). Thus, dramatic genetic discontinuities are not found among modern human population and even the little variation, far more within-group than between group. In other words, *there lack a unifying genetic essence for people of the same race*; people of the same race are not necessarily "*closely related*" when compared to people of different races. Biologically speaking, because of the blending of people from different parts of the world, there is no such thing as a "**pure**" race (Shwartz, 2001). As a result, use of race as system of human categorization lacks scientific validity (Haga & Venter, Science, 2003).Dramatic genetic discontinuities are not found among modern human population and even the little variation, far more within-group than between group; there lack a unifying genetic essence for people of the same race. Biologically speaking, there is no such thing as a "pure" race and race has no scientific validity to be used as means of group identification/categorization.

Nevertheless, when used as a social construction of human categorization 'Race' is *human groups defined by itself or others as distinct by virtue of perceived common physical characteristics that are held to be inherent*. In this sense of the concept, race is a group of human beings socially defined on the basis of physical traits. At this level, concept of race would be important to the extent that *it will inform people's actions*; where *it exists as a cultural construct*, whether it has a "biological" reality or not. ***Racism***, obviously, builds on the assumption that *personality is somehow linked with hereditary characteristics,* which differ systematically between "races", and in this way race may assume sociological importance even if it has no "objective" existence. Social scientists who study race relations need not themselves believe in the existence of race, since their object of study is the social and cultural relevance of the notion that race exists. Hence, in societies, where they are important, ideas of race may therefore, be studied as part of local discourses on ethnicity.

As a social construction of human categorization 'Racial group' is a group of people, defined by itself or others as distinct by virtue of perceived common physical characteristics that are held to be inherent.

In such contexts however, the question remains *do race/racial relation or identity distinguishable from ethnicity/ethnic relations or identity?* Different anthropologists and other scholars have different views on this.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What is the difference between ethnicity and race / ethnic identification and racial identification?
- Under what societal conditions do race and ethnic prejudice and discrimination develop & conflicts occur?

Scholars like Pierre van den Berghe (1983) other than differentiating the two concepts, regard "race" relations as a special case of ethnicity. He describes race as *"a special marker of ethnicity*" that uses biological characteristics as an ethnic marker. In other words 'race' is a social construct, where phenotypic attributes are popularly used to denote in-groups from out-groups. Since there is no sound biological or sociological foundation for its use in an analytical sense, one should treat 'race' as no more than a special case of ethnicity. Hence, when the term 'race' is used in popular discourse, it cannot refer to a '*sub-species of Homo sapiens*' (van den Berghe, 1978) but is applied only as a social attribute. It is viewed as a '*socially defined group which sees itself and is seen by others as being phenotypically different from other such groups'*.

Contrary to this, other scholars (e.g., Georges Vacher de la Pouge 1896, Max Weber 1992, John Rex 1973, Michael Banton 1967, and Gerald Berreman 1972 & 1981) argued that while there is much overlap between race and ethnicity, they are distinct concepts and so that they need to be distinguished. In this regard, Max Weber (1922), differentiated between racial and ethnic identity by proposing that a *blood relationship was necessary for racial identification but not for ethnic identification*.

John Rex in his part explained that "*a far wider set of situations are based upon cultural differentiation of groups (in the form ethnic groups) than those which are commonly called racial and . . . few of them have anything like the same conflictual consequences that racial situations do*" (Rex 1973: 184). For Rex, ethnicity is still a wider classificatory or organizational principle than 'race', and it remains true that few ethnic conflicts are as bloody as 'racial' ones (the comparison between the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda) in this regard is depressingly instructive here.

In more specific terms, Gerald Berreman (1972, 1981) provides his own distinctions between ethnicity and race. As per to Berreman, ethnicity is linked in a dichotic relationship with race. It is differentiated from race in that *racial stratification is associated with birth-ascribed status based on physical and cultural characteristics defined by outside groups*. *Ethnicity is also ascribed at birth, but the ethnic group normally defines its cultural characteristics itself*. Thus, racial categorizations, which are defined by the outsider, are normally laced with inaccuracies and stereotypes, while ethnic classification is normally more accurate of a cultural group because it is defined by the group itself. Yet, ethnic classifications can also be defined and used by outside groups to stereotype an ethnic community in ways that are often oversimplified and that view ethnicity as a static cultural process.

Despite this however, some scholars claims that the external ethnic boundaries are the source of racial distinctions and of race as a group phenomenon. As a social phenomenon, race is a response to external categorization and exclusion and whatever internal dynamics race generates, it is always a response to external exclusion rather than to internal identity-generating forces.

To return briefly to the quotation from John Rex, it appears that ethnicity is a more general social phenomenon than racism or 'racial' categorization. It is equally clear that ethnicity, although its emphasis may conventionally be thought to fall upon group identification, is routinely implicated, through the signification of cultural or ethnic markers, in processes of categorization. Race or skin colour as such is not the decisive variable in every society.

5.5. Theories of Ethnicity: *Primordialism, Instrumentalism and Social Constructivism*

Introduction

Since the middle of twentieth century, when ethnicity as an analytical concept entered the academic arena, a lot has been written and debated on its conceptual definitions, its manifestations in social or group interaction, the role it plays in group mobilization for 'common ends', and so forth. Over the years, this has turned into a perennial and argumentative debate about the nature of ethnicity/ethnic identity. This argument takes its place alongside a range of theoretical controversies about the capacity of humans to intervene in their own lives, to determine or to be determined. In general, *the Primordialist*, Instrumentalist and Constructivist are the dominant theoretical approaches in anthropology envisaged to understand the nature and characteristics of ethnicity, ethnic identity and ethnic interaction. Thus, this section will provide a brief theoretical debates and discussions on the fundamentals of ethnicity.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- Is ethnicity a fundamental aspect of human nature & self-consciousness, essentially unchanging and unchangeable?
- Is ethnicity an irresistible aspect of human nature?
- Is it, to whatever extent, socially constructed, strategically or tactically manipulatable, and capable of change at both the individual and collective levels?
- Is it socially constructed?

Table 1 - Three Basic Anthropological Approaches for Understanding Ethnicity

Perspective	Description
Primordialist Approach	*Ethnicity is fixed at birth. Ethnic identification is based on deep, 'primordial' attachments to a group or culture*
Instrumentalist Approach	*Ethnicity, based on people's "historical" and "symbolic" memory,*

	is something created and used and exploited by leaders and others in the pragmatic pursuit of their own interests.
Constructivist Approach	*Ethnic identity is not something people "possess" but something they "construct" in specific social and historical contexts to further their own interests. It is therefore fluid and subjective.*

These theories broadly reflect changes of approach in anthropology over the **past 20 years,** i.e. the shift from cultural evolution theories, to structural-functionalist theories, to conflict theories, and finally to postmodern theories. These changes are related to the twin forces of modernity and globalization. Globalization started as an economic phenomenon and end up as a phenomenon of identity. Traditional ways people defined who they were have been undermined. Modernity has, remade life in such a way that "*the past is stripped away, place loses its significance, community loses its hold, objective moral norms vanish, and what remains is simply the self."* The result of this process has been a loss of identity resulting in fragmentation and rootlessness (anomie) at the personal level and the blurring of identities at the collective level.

Some scholars claim that there have been irreconcilable and unbreakable barriers between the above divergently contending, but dominant approaches of ethnicity. For instance, Banks (1996) portrayed the divergences between the leading theories of ethnicity as follows:

> ...the contents of ethnic identity versus its boundary, the primordial gut feeling of an identity versus its instrumental expression, the individuals versus the group, ethnicity as an all-inclusive general theory versus ethnicity as a limited approach to particular problems are the polar extremes central in theories of ethnicity…. (Banks, 1996: 47).

These divergently contending models of ethnicity are discussed briefly as follows.

5.5.1. The Primordial Model of Ethnicity

The *Primordialist* approach is the oldest in anthropological literature. It was popular until the mid-1970s. The roots of *Primordialist* thinking can be traced back to the German Romantic philosophers, especially J.G. Herder. Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803), proclaimed the primacy of emotions and language, and defined society a deep-seated, mythical community. Herder envisaged that every *Volk* (people) had its own values, customs, language and 'spirit' (*Volksgeist*) and argued for the "*atavistic power*" of the *blood* and *soil* (*Blut und Boden*) that bound one closely with one's people (*das Volk*). Indeed, Primordialism is an "objectivist or essentialist theory" which argues, that "*ultimately there is some real, tangible, foundation for ethnic identification*."

The anthropologist, Clifford Geertz (1973: 255-310), who systematized the primordial model articulated ethnicity as a natural phenomenon with its foundations in primordial ties - deriving mainly from kinship, locality and culture (Geertz 1963). Geertz explicitly recognizes not only the role of culture in defining the primordial *'givens'*, but also that strength of such primordial bonds, and the types of them that are important, differ from person to person, from society to society, and from time to time (Geertz 1973: 259). Further, Geertz is perfectly clear that what matters analytically is that ties of blood, language and culture are *seen* by actors to be ineffable and obligatory; that they are *seen* as natural. He is also concerned with the terms in which attachments are understood and mobilized locally; with what people *believe.* Geertz further argues that in some respects these putative 'primordial attachments' are actually likely to be stimulated and quickened by the political modernization of nation-building. In its general sense then, it can be said that ethnicity is something given, ascribed at birth, deriving from the kin-and-clan-structure of human society, and hence something more or less fixed and permanent (Geertz, 1963; Isaacs, 1975; Stack, 1986).

A model by Isaacs (1974) further illustrated the concept of primordial ties as a means of explaining the power and persistence of ethnic identity, which he called '***basic group identity***' (Jones 1997:65–66). Isaacs's basic group identity was linked to ethnic identity, which was argued to be assigned at birth and more fundamental and natural than other social links.

Primordialist theories view human society as ***a conglomeration of distinct social groups***. At birth a person "becomes" a member of a particular group. Ethnic identification is based on deep, 'primordial' attachments to that group, established by kinship and descent. One's ethnicity is thus "fixed" and an unchangeable part of one's identity.

Anthony D. Smith (1986), one of the articulators of this perspective, in his part, theorized the defining elements of ethnic identification as psychological and emotional, emerging from a person's historical and cultural backgrounds. He illustrated that the 'core' of ethnicity resides in the myths, memories, values, symbols and the characteristic styles of particular historic configurations, i.e., what he calls *'a myth-symbol complex'.* The durability of the *ethnie* (ethnic group) resides in the forms and content of the myth-symbol complex. Of pivotal importance for the survival of the *ethnie* is the diffusion and transmission of the myth-symbol complex to its unit of population and its future generations.

Smith emphasizes the "extraordinary persistence and resilience of ethnic ties and sentiments, once formed" and argues that they are essentially primordial since they are received through ethnic socialization into one's *ethnie* and are more or less fixed. And, regards primordial ties as the basic organizing principles and bonds of human association throughout history.

To sum, Smith concluded that, 'primordialism' makes ***two distinct claims***. Firstly, ethnicity and ethnic attachment is "***natural and innate***", which would never change over time, and secondly, it is "***ancient and perennial***" (Smith, 1986). By this, ethnicity is an ascribed status and ethnic membership is fixed, permanent and primarily ascribed through birth.

5.5.2. Instrumentalist (Situational) Theory of Ethnicity

The instrumentalist theorists view ethnicity as situationally defined, depending on rational calculations of advantage and stimulated by political mobilization under the leadership of actors whose primary motives are non-ethnic (Eidheim, 1971, Cohen, 1974a, and Esman, 1994). Given this, Banks (1996) explained the instrumentalist understandings of ethnicity as *an instrument of group mobilization for political and economic ends* (Banks, 1996: 40). By this, ethnicity is something that can be changed, constructed or even manipulated to gain specific political and/or economic ends.

Proponents of this perspective (e.g., Abner Cohen, Paul Brass and Ted Gurr) advocate that in the contexts of modern states, leaders (political elites) use and manipulate perceptions of ethnic identity to further their own ends and stay in power. In this regard, *ethnicity is created in the dynamics of elite competition within the boundaries determined by political and economic realities*" and *ethnic groups are to be seen as a product of political myths, created and manipulated by culture elites in their pursuit of advantages and power*.

Abner Cohen (1974), one of the leading advocator of this perspective, in contrast to Barth, "*placed [a] greater emphasis on the ethnic group as a collectively organized strategy for the protection of economic and political interests*" (Jones 1997:74). Ethnic groups share common interests, and in pursuit of these interests they develop "*basic organizational functions*: *such as distinctiveness or boundaries (ethnic identity); communication; authority structure; decision making procedure; ideology; and socialization*" (Cohen 1974: xvi–xvii).

Accordingly, Daniel Bell (1975) and Jeffrey Ross (1982) emphasize the political advantage of ethnic membership choice. Hence, ethnicity is "*a group option in which resources are mobilized for the purpose of pressuring the political system to allocate public goods for the benefit of the members of a self-differentiating collectivity*" (Ross, 1982). In more general terms, it refers to the actor's pliant ascription of ethnic identity to organize the meaning of his social relationships within the requirements of variously structured social situations (Okamura, 1981). In his anthropological research on New York Chinatown, Enoch Wan has found that the "Chinese ethnicity" of this immigrant community is circumstantial, flexible, fluid and instrumental.

Taken to its extreme this would suggest that the ***ethnic group*** should be regarded *not as a community* at all but as *a rational and purposive association*. A more moderate view is that there is indeed a cultural content in an ethnic community, but that the boundaries of the group, which has that culture, depend upon the purpose in hand. The pursuit of political advantage and/or material self-interest is the calculus, which is typically, held to inform such behaviour.

5.5.3. Social Constructivist Theory of Ethnicity

The basic notion in this approach is that ethnicity is something that is being negotiated and constructed in everyday living. It regards ethnicity as a process, which continues to unfold. It

has much to do with the exigencies of everyday survival (*ethnicity is constructed in the process of feeding, clothing, sending to school and conversing with children and others*). Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this approach is its ***subjectivist stance,*** which sees ethnicity as basically a social-psychological reality or a matter of perception of "us" and "them" in contradistinction to looking at it as something given, which exists objectively as it were "out there". By this, ethnicity is more dependent on the socio-psychological experience of individuals, where it focuses on the interpersonal and behavioral aspects of ethnicity. However, this does not mean that all “subjectivists” reject all objective aspects of ethnicity. Some, in fact give them significant attention. But, they all tend to make it dependent on the socio-psychological experience.

F. Barth is the leading figure of this approach. Barth viewed ethnic identity as an “***individualistic strategy***” in which individuals move from one identity to another to “advance their personal economic and political interests, or to minimize their losses” (Jones 1997:74). Following Barth, ethnic identity forms through boundary maintenance and interaction between individuals. Depending on each social interaction, a person’s ethnic identity can be perceived or presented in various ways.

In fact, Barth himself took a rather extreme position. For practical purposes, he jettisoned culture from the concept of ethnicity. For him, ethnic boundaries were psychological boundaries; ethnic culture and its content were irrelevant. Overall, interaction between individuals does not lead to an assimilation or homogenization of culture. Instead, cultural diversity and ethnic identity are still maintained, but in a non-static form. Cultural traits and even individuals can cross over ethnic boundaries, which in turn can transform an ethnic group over time. Ethnic group is hence a result of group relations in which the boundaries are established through mutual perceptions and not by means of any objectively distinct culture.

In general, constructivists conceive ethnicity as situational, flexible and variable dealing with inter-personal ethnicity without initially reifying a concept of culture. Jenkins (1997) further noted that, as far as the flow of individuals from one ethnic group to another is possible, it is possible to argue that the boundaries of ethnicity are permeable and osmotic (Jenkins,

1997: 53). This provoked that ethnicity is dynamic that changes through time and space; and ethnic identities are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- Can you draw a clear line between the major arguments of primordialism, instrumentalism and social constructivism about the nature and characteristics of ethnicity?
- Is it wrong to assume instrumentalism as another version of constructivism? Why?

5.6. Unit Summary

In this chapter we have tried to explain the concepts of identity, ethnicity as identity categorization. Ethnicity has got a widespread mainstream use in end of 20th c. It is employed to describe an expanding range of social and political concerns. As we have seen as the term has gained popularity, so have its meanings shifted. Most social scientists from Weber to Barth agreed today that ethnicity is a constructed, artificial category the characteristics and boundaries of which have been renegotiated, redefined over the years to suit different contexts and objectives. There also seems a confusion between race and ethnicity. Most people seem to consider race as a biological construct fundamentally explained in terms of phenotypical expressions. However, as it has been already elucidated race itself is human construct. We have also seen the three prominent theories of ethnicity. Primordialism holds that ethnicity has existed at all times of human history and that modern ethnic groups have historical roots far into the past with an understanding of humanity as being divided into primordially existing groups rooted by kinship and biological heritage. Constructivism sees the primordialist views as basically flawed, and holds that ethnic groups are only products of human social interaction, maintained only in so far as they are maintained as valid social constructs in societies. We have also seen that Instrumentalism isa perspective towards ethnicity that sees ethnic classification as a mechanism of social stratification or as the basis for a social hierarchy.

5.7. Assessment techniques

The assessment methods to be used in this unit include; quiz, group assignment, individual assignments, administering different examinations and mandatory reading assignments.

5.8. Facilities Required:

White/Blackboard, LCD/Power Point Presentations, Whiteboard Markers …. etc

Suggested Reading Materials

Max Weber, *Economy and Society* v1, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, eds. (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968)

George DeVos and Lola Romanucci-Ross, eds. *Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change*, (Palo Alto: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1975).

M. Elaine Burgess, "The Resurgence of Ethnicity: Myth or Reality?" in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1, 1978.

David Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

Paul Brass, *Ethnic Groups and the State* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1985)

Pierre van den Berghe, *The Ethnic Phenomenon* (New York: Praeger, 1987).

Milton Yinger, *Ethnicity: Source of Strength? Source of Conflict?* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994)

Abner Cohen, Customs and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Migrants in Yoruba Towns (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969)

Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991).

Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1969).

Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*: *Anthropological Perspectives (London: Pluto* Press, 1993).

Unit Six

6. Customary and Local Governance Systems and Peace Making

Study Hours: 8 Face to Face Hours

Dear Students!

You have discussed theories related to inter-ethnic relations and multiculturalism in unit 5. In this unit, you will discuss issues related to customary and local governance and peacemaking in the Ethiopian setting. The chapter also discusses the role of customary institutions in settling intra and inter-ethnic conflicts; the role of women and women's institutions in conflict resolution and peacemaking; and the major features of legal pluralism in Ethiopia. Remember: your participation is very important as the modular course employs a student-centered approach.

Content of the Unit:

- Indigenous and local governance
- Institutions of intra and inter-ethnic conflict resolution
- Structures of indigenous justice systems
- Strengths and limitations of indigenous conflict resolution institutions
- Women's role in conflict resolution and peacemaking
- Legal pluralism: interaction between customary and state legal systems

Unit Learning Outcomes:

Up on the successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify customary systems of governance and conflict resolution institutions of the various peoples of Ethiopia;
- Compare similarities and difference among indigenous institutions conflict resolution in a cross-cultural perspective;
- Analyze the strengths and limitations of indigenous institutions conflict resolution

- Explain the role of women and women's institutions in settling disputes and making peace in different cultural settings

6.1 Indigenous and local governance

Indigenous systems of governance have been used to maintain social order across Ethiopian regions. The role of indigenous governance was indispensable before the advent of the modern state system. Anthropologists have been studying indigenous systems of governance in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa. Some of the indigenous systems of governance have been well- studied while many other are not adequately studied. Understanding of indigenous systems of governance helps us know our cultures. We do not have space to take examples from every region and culture. We have outlined some examples of indigenous systems of governance to start discussions.

The Oromo Gadaa

The Gaada of the Oromo is one of the well-studies indigenous systems of governance. Scholars have been studying the Oromo Gaada since the 1950s. Scholars studied the Oromo Gaada include Paul Baxter, Eike Haberland and Asmerom Legesse. Asmerom, a famous anthropologist, is widely known for his ethnographic studies on the Oromo political system. He published a lot on the Gaada system, particularly focusing on the Borena Oromo. The following are two of his books: *Gadaa: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society,* published in 1973; and *Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous Political System*, printed in 2000.

The *Gadaa* system is 'an age grading institution of the Oromo that has a complex system of administration, law making and dispute settlement' (Pankhurst and Getachew 2008, xiv). The *Gadaa* is a highly celebrated institution of governance and dispute settlement among the Oromo people. *Gadaa* is widely mentioned as an egalitarian (democratic) system of governance. In the Gadaa system, political power is transferred from one generation set (*Luuba*) to another every eight years. Gaada officials such as the *Abba Gaada* and *Abba Seera*(father of law) serve for eight years and leave their position to the new generation of *Gadaa* officials.

The *Gaada* system involves a continuous process of law making and revision. The law making process has rooms for wider participation of the people. *Gumi gaayo*, a law making

assembly of the Borana Oromo, is a good example. *Gumi gaayo* is held every eight years to revising, adapting, making and publicizing the customary law (*seera*) and custom (*aadaa*) of the Oromo. The Waliso Oromo have a law making assembly known as *yaa'iiharaa*, an equivalent of *gumigaayo*, held every eight years. The Gaada is an indigenous system of governance, conflict resolution, and peacemaking. The indigenous system of governance among the Oromo also include institutions of conflict resolution such as the *Jaarsa Biyyaa* (literally: elders of the soil/land) institution. We will discuss the role of the *Jaarsa Buyyaa* in settling conflicts and restoring peace in the next section of this chapter.

The Gedeo Baalle

The Gedeo of southern Ethiopia have an indigenous system of governance called *Baalle*. The *Baalle* and the *Gaada* system of the Oromo have some similarities. For example, both have grading system and exercise periodic transfer of power (i.e., every eight years). The role of religion is high in the two indigenous systems of governance. Moreover, the customary law of the Gedeo is called *Seera*. The Ya'a, the general assembly, is the highest body of the Gedeo indigenous system of governance. The Baalle is a complex system which has three administrative hierarchies: Abba Gada, Roga (traditional leader next the *Abba Gada*), and two levels of council of elders known as Hulla Hayyicha and *Songo Hayyicha.* The *Abba Gada* is the leader of the *Baalle*. The *Baalle* system has a body of laws called *Seera*. Conflicts are resolved by the *Songo hayyicha* at village level. When disputes are not settled at the village level, cases can be referred to first to the Hulla Hayyicha and finally to the *Abba Gada*. In general, the Gedeo system of governance has the following major institutions: the *ya'a* (general assembly), the *Seera* (customary law), the Abba Gada, *and* council of elders. [2]

Reading

We have seen some similarities between the Oromo Gaada and the Gedeo Baalle system. This is a good example of cross-cultural similarities in Ethiopia. Similarities are also observed in the naming of indigenous institutions. Several ethnic groups use a similar term with slight variations to refer to their respective customary law: *Seera* (Oromo), *Sera* (Sidama), *Serra* (Siltie),

[2]Getachew Senishaw. (2014).

Gorden a*sera* (Soddo Gurage), Senago *sera* (Mesqan Gurage), and *Seera* (Gedeo).

Read more on these issues and share your findings in class discussions.

Reflect your views on the following questions.

- What does the similarities between Gaada and the Gedeo Baalle system indicate?
- Why do we have such cross-cultural similarities?
- Does it indicate long-term interactions among different cultural/ethnic groups?

Dere Woga of the Gamo

The Gamo are among Omotic peoples of southern Ethiopia. Unlike their neighboring people such as Wolayta and Dawro, the Gamo did not have a centralized political system. The Gamo people were organized into several local administrations locally known as *deres*. According to anthropological findings, there were more than 40 *deres* across the Gamo highlands. Each *dere* had its own *ka'o* (king) and *halaqa* (elected leader). The indigenous system of governance embraces the *dere woga* (customary law) and the *dubusha* assemblies. The highest body of the indigenous governance is the *dere dubusha*, a general assembly that is responsible to make and revise customary laws, resolve major disputes that cannot be solved at the lower levels. The *dubushas* assembly has three hierarchies: 1) the *dere dubusha* (at the top), sub-*dere dubusha* (at the middle), and *guta*/neighborhood *dubusha* (at the village level). Minor cases and disputes are resolved by the *dere cima*, council of elders. Like the Oromo Gada and the Gedeo Baalle, the indigenous governance of the Gamo is embedded in the Gamo belief system. It is believed that telling a lie and hiding the truth are considered as violation of taboo, which would lead to spiritual pollution and then misfortunes including lack of fertility, illness, and death of human beings and livestock.

Now, let us shift to indigenous institutions of conflict resolution and peace making. Now let us shift to indigenous institutions of conflict resolution.

6.2 Intra and inter-ethnic conflict resolution institutions

Conflicts and disputes exist in every society and community. Conflicts may arise between individuals, groups and communities within the same ethnic group. In some cases conflicts may involve groups from different ethnic background. Peoples across Ethiopian regions have indigenous institutions and mechanisms of conflict resolution and peacemaking. These institutions are parts of indigenous systems of governance. Major features of customary justice systems, institutions, and practices are discussed in this section. As Ethiopia is a big multicultural country, we need to discuss these issues taking some examples. You, as a student, are expected to read different materials and discuss issues with your classmates to expand your knowledge.

There are different indigenous institutions of conflict resolution and peacemaking across regions and cultures in Ethiopia. Authors use different terms to discuss these indigenous institutions. The following are some of them: customary dispute resolution mechanisms; traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution; grassroots justice systems; and customary justice institutions. To get more information, see books edited by Alula Pankhurst and Getache Assefa (2008) and Gebre Y., Fekade A. and Assefa F. (2011). In this module, we use indigenous institutions of conflict resolution and customary/indigenous justice systems interchangeably.

Study findings reveal variations and similarities among indigenous institutions of conflict resolution in Ethiopia. Indigenous justice institutions and mechanisms share several common aspects including the following:

- High involvement of elders at different stages of conflict resolution and peacemaking process.
- Preference and respect for elders known for their qualities including experience in dispute resolution; knowledge of customary laws, procedures, norms and values of

the society; impartiality, respect for rules and people; the ability of listening and speaking politely; honesty and tolerance.

- Indigenous dispute resolution practices focus on restoring social relationships, harmony, and peaceful coexistence.

Indigenous justice systems also have differences in terms of hierarchies, procedures and level of complexities. For example,

- In some cultural settings, conflict resolution mechanisms involve several hierarchies and complicated procedures;
- The compositions and responsibilities of council of elders also vary from society to society. For example, different types of elders address different forms of disputes in some cultural settings; whereas the same body of elders deal with various types of disputes in other settings.

Reading

Getachew Assefa and Alula Pankhurst (2008) have outlined ten major characteristics of indigenous dispute resolution in Ethiopia. Public participation, voluntary and consensual proceedings, and forgiveness and compensation are among the major features listed by the authors. Read the last chapter Grassroots Justice in Ethiopia (2008) edited by Alula Pankhurst and GetachewAssefa take note on major characteristics of indigenous dispute resolution; their advantages and limitations in Ethiopia.

Indigenous/customary justice institutions have been widely used across Ethiopian regions and cultures. With some exceptions, customary justice institutions include three major components. The three components are 1) customary laws, 2) council of elders, and 3) customary courts or assemblies.

Customary law: it refers to a body of rules, norms, and a set of moral values that serve as a wider framework for human conduct and social interactions. The Sera of the Sidama, the dere woga of the Gamo, the Seera Addaa of the Oromo; Gordena Sera of Kestane Gurage are examples of customary laws. In most cases, customary laws are available orally. Some

customary laws are published in recent years. For example, the Sebat Bet Gurage published their customary law named *Kitcha: The Gurage Customary Law* in 1998. Similarly, Kistane/Sodo Gurage have a written version of customary law known as Gordena Shengo.

Council of elders: It is the second important institution of customary justice systems. The council of elders embraces highly respected and well-experienced community members who have a detail knowledge of the customary laws. Members of the elder's council are also known for their personal qualities such as truthfulness and experience in settling conflicts. Elders often serve their communities on voluntary basis without any payment. The number of the elders varies based on the nature of the case. The institution of council of elders has different names in various ethnic groups: *Yehager Shimagile* (Amhara), *Jaarsaa Biyyaa* (Oromo), Hayyicha (Gedeo), Guurtii (Somali), *Dere Cima* (Gamo), *Deira Cimma* (Wolayita), and *Cimuma* (Burji).

Reflect your view on the following questions

The last three ethnic groups use similar terms to refer to council of elders: Dere *Cima* (Gamo), Deria *Cimma* (Wolayita), and *Cimuma* (Burji).

- How do you explain this similarity?
- Do you think that it is due to similarities in culture and language?

Customary courts are public assemblies that serve two major purposes: (a) hearing, discussing and settling disputes, and (b) revising, adapting, and making laws.

As noted above, in most cases, indigenous justice systems in Ethiopia embrace three major structures: customary laws, customary courts, and council of elders. Let us summarize the Gamo customary justice system to portray the three major structures. The customary justice system of the Gamo people of Southern Ethiopia has the following branches: 1) *Dere Woga*, customary laws, 2) *Dere Cima*, council of elders, and 3) *Dubusha*, customary courts or assemblies.

The three structures of Gamo customary justice system

The Dere Woga: It is a comprehensive body of rules and procedures that govern a wide range of issues including inheritance, property ownership, marriage and divorce, conflict resolution and gender division of labour.

The *Dere Cima:* Literally, *dere cima* means elders of the land/country. It includes notable and respected elders experienced in resolving disputes. Elders serving in dispute resolution are expected to have a sound knowledge of the customary laws, norms and values of the community.

Dubusha: it is customary courts*. Dere dubusha,* the biggest customary court in a given Gamo community, has two major functions: (a) hearing, discussing and resolving disputes, and (b) revising and making laws. In most Gamo communities, the structure of the customary courts has three levels*: Guta dubusha,* at the village level; sub-dere *dubusha,* at the *kebele* level; and *dere dubusha* at the higher level. Cases would be heard at the *guta dubusha* level, if not settled, referred to the second and third level of the structure. According to the indigenous belief, *dere dubusha* is a sacred place where supernatural power exists. It is a place where curses are uttered in its name; justice is delivered; and important assemblies are held. *Dubushas* are places where truth prevails. Misconducts such as telling a lie during *dubusha* assemblies are considered as transgression of taboos, which in turn would bring misfortunes to individuals and communities. Customary courts are easily accessible as each Gamo community has several customary courts *[Sources: Temesgen Minwagaw 2011; Getaneh Mehari* 2016].

Strengths and limitations of customary justice systems/institutions

Study findings indicate that indigenous institutions of dispute resolution have strengths and limitations. Some of their strengths and limitations are outlined below.

Strengths of customary justice institutions

- Incur limited cost in terms of time and resources/money; elders do not request payment for their services; fines and compensation are relatively small;
- Conflict resolution process are held in public spaces in the community; different parties (victims, offenders and community members) participate in the process; decisions are communicated in public;

- Decisions are easily enforced through community-based sanctions including social exclusion; compliance ensured through blessings and the threat of curses;
- Customary systems aimed at restoring community cohesion, social relations, collective spirit and social solidarity
- Rely on respect for elders, the tradition of forgiveness, transferring compensations, embedded in indigenous beliefs

Limitations of customary justice institutions

- Limitations related to protecting and safeguarding women's rights. Indigenous justice institutions are dominated by men. For example, the council of elders are not open to elderly women. Women are excluded from participation at customary courts and assemblies with a few exceptions.
- Indigenous institutions of dispute resolution and peacemaking are effective to resolve dispute and restore peace within the same ethnic group. Their potential in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts and restoring long-lasting peace is very limited.

Elders of neighboring ethnic groups work together in times of inter-ethnic conflicts and settle disputes. However, indigenous institutions of conflict resolution have limitations in restoring long-lasting peace when conflicts occur between parties from two or more ethnic groups.

- How do you explain this problem?
- Is there a possibility of crafting hybrid institutions to resolve disputes occurring between different ethnic groups? Discuss this issue among your classmates.

6.3 Inter-ethnic conflict resolution

As noted above, one of the weaknesses of indigenous institution of peacemaking is their limitation in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts. However, there are some example of inter-ethnic conflict resolution institutions in some parts of Ethiopia. Abbo Gereb is one of the

indigenous institutions that address inter-ethnic conflicts. It is a dispute resolution institution in Rayya and Wajirat district, Southern Tigray. Abbo Gereb, literally means the father of the river Gerewo. Abbo Gereb serves to settle disputes between individuals or groups from highland Tigray and lowland Afar. Conflict between the two groups often arise because of dispute over grazing land or water resources, particularly in dry season. When conflict arises between parties from two ethnic groups, notable elders from Tigray and Afar come together to resolve the dispute and restore peaceful relations. Most of the elders involved in inter-ethnic conflict resolutions are bilingual: speaking Tigrigna and Afar.[3]

Ethnographic findings also reveal the existence of inter-ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms when conflicts arise between Afar, Issa, Tigrayans and Argobba. The mechanisms of inter-ethnic disputes have different names. It is called Xinto among the Afar, Edible among the Issa, Gereb among the Tigrayans, and Aboroge among the Amhara.[4]

Although we have some studies on indigenous institutions of inter-ethnic conflict resolution, this area is not well-studied.

- Do you know institutions/mechanisms of conflict resolution that address inter-ethnic conflicts? Bring your experience and knowledge to class discussion!

6.4 Women's role in conflict resolution and peacemaking

Ethiopian women participate in the process of dispute settlement in exceptional cases. For example, in some cultures, women participate in dispute settlement processes when cases are related to marriage and women's issues. Despite this weaknesses, women are not completely excluded for indigenous systems of governance, conflict resolution, and peacemaking activities. In some societies, women use their own institutions to exercise

[3] Shimeles Gizaw and Taddese Gessese. (2008).

[4] Alula Pankhurst and Getachew Assefa. (2008).

power, protect their rights, and actively participate in peacemaking activities. The next section discusses the role of women in conflict resolution and peacemaking.

The elderly have been playing an important role in settling disputes and restoring peace. Their words and instructions were highly respected across cultures in Ethiopia. Intra and inter-ethnic conflicts have become common in our country in recent years.

- What do you think are the causes of these conflicts?

- Is it related to the decline of respect for the elderly in recent times?

- Or has the culture of peaceful coexistence deteriorated?

One of the limitations of customary justice systems, as noted above, is the marginalization of women. In most cases, indigenous institution of conflict resolution are dominated by men. This does not mean that women are completely excluded from conflict resolution and peacemaking activities. Three examples that illustrate the role of women in conflict resolution and peacemaking are outlined below. Read them and discuss issues related to women's role in peacemaking in Ethiopia.

Women's peacemaking sticks[5]

Sidama women have two instruments of power: the Yakka and the Siqqo. The Yakka is women's association or unity group. The Siqqo is a stick that symbolizes peace and women honor. The Siqqoand the Yakka are closely associated. Mobilizing the Yakka and holding the Siqqo, Sidama women stand for their customary rights. They do this, for example, when a woman is beaten up by her husband or a pregnant woman is mistreated. For example, if a man prohibits his wife from Yakka participation, the women group impose a fine on him. The fine could be an ox. If a woman is ill-treated by her husband, the Yakka leader (known as Qaritte) mobilizes the Yakka and leads them to the house of the man. The husband would not have a choice when he is surrounded by the Yakka holding their Siqqo shouting and singing. If he is found guilty, the man would be forced to slaughter a

[5] International Institute of Rural Reconciliation (IIRR). 2009.

sheep and give part of it to the Yakka. Sidama women also use their Siqqo to make peace between quarrelling parties. Oromo women also have a peace stick called Sinqee. Sinqee serves the purpose of protecting women's rights and making peace. Quarrelling men stop fighting when a woman stands between them holding her Sinqee.

The function of women's peacemaking institutions such as *Siqqo* has been declining. There are attempts to renew these institutions. The *Walda Sinqee* Association was established to promote the use of the *Sinqee* as a means of conflict resolution. The Association provide other services to women: refugee centers for abused women, legal and financial support, and capacity building trainings. *Sinqee* associations are now recognized and supported by women's affairs and culture and tourism offices in Oromia.

☙ Is strengthening women's institutions important to foster peacemaking in Ethiopia?

☙ Do you know other women's peacemaking institutions in other parts of Ethiopia? Discuss this issue in some detail

Don Kachel: Agnuak women peacemaking institution

Women in many regions of Ethiopia play an important role in peacemaking. Agnuak women have a peacemaking institution known as Don Kachel (IIRR, 2009, p. 28)[6]*. Literally, DonKachel means 'let us all live in peace'. It involves a peace-making movement initiated by Jaye, a group of wise and elderly Agnuak women. The Jaye start a peace-making movement based on information gathered through women's networking. The Jaye gather information about potential conflicts from different sources, including gossips spread in the community. The Jaye quickly act upon receiving information about, for example, a heated argument that could lead to conflict and fighting. The Jaye call the disputing parties for a meeting to settle the dispute. A few neutral observers will also be invited to monitor the process of the meeting. After examining the arguments of the two parties, the Jaye give their verdict. The party that caused the conflict request for forgiveness in public and pay some compensation. A sheep or goat is slaughtered after the conflict resolved; the meat is cooked and shared by participants of the meeting. Finally the Jaye would announce the meeting is over, the problem*

[6] International Institute of Rural Reconciliation (IIRR). 2009.

resolved, using these words 'Now let us all live in peace together!' The practice of Don Kachel is currently being adopted by other ethnic groups including the Nuer, Mejenger, Opo, and Komo.

	The role of women as mothers has been highly respected in Ethiopia. At times of potential conflict, women, bearing their breast, would say the following to stop conflicts: *'please stop quarreling for the sake of my breast that feeds you!'*Women use powerful words such as '*batebahuh tutie'* in Amharic speaking areas to influence quarrelling individuals. Younger people used to respect the words of mothers and the elderly. ☙ What do you observe in today's Ethiopia? ☙ How far the youth respect words of mothers and parents? ☙ How do younger people respond to advice of the elderly? ☙ Where are we heading in this regard?

Women's institution of reconciliation: Raya-Azebo, Tigray

Elderly and highly respected women in a village in Raya-Azebo, Tigray established a reconciliation institution called the Debarte. The Debarte plays an important role in avoiding harms associated with the culture of revenge. A man may kill another man in a fight. The incident would trigger the feeling of revenge among male relatives of the murdered man. In such a tense situation, the wife of the killer requests for the Debarte intervention. The Debarte quickly start their intervention to stop the act of revenge. The Debarte instruct the murderer's wife to gathering her female relatives together. The wife and her female relatives get ready wearing their netela upside down and covering their hair with black cloths to show their grief and regret. After these preparations, the Debarte lead the female relatives of the killer to the home of the murdered man. The women cry loudly while walking to their destination. As they come near to the home of the killed person, they utter the following words: 'Abyetye ezgio! Abyetye ezgio!' 'Oh God help us! God help us! Upon their arrival at the compound of the victim, the Debarte kneel down and cover theirheads with the dust of the compound. They beg the relatives/family of the murdered man to give uprevenge and consider forgiveness. Initially, the relatives may not respond to the request; however, they will change their mind and open the door to show their consent for reconciliation. After persuading the victim's relatives to give up revenge, the Debarte give the way for elders who start the peace-making process.

Reflect your views on the following questions

- What do you think about the contribution of the *Debarte* in avoiding revenge and making peace?
- Do you know other women's institutions involved in making peace?
- Do you think that women could play an important role in peacemaking in the current situation of Ethiopia?

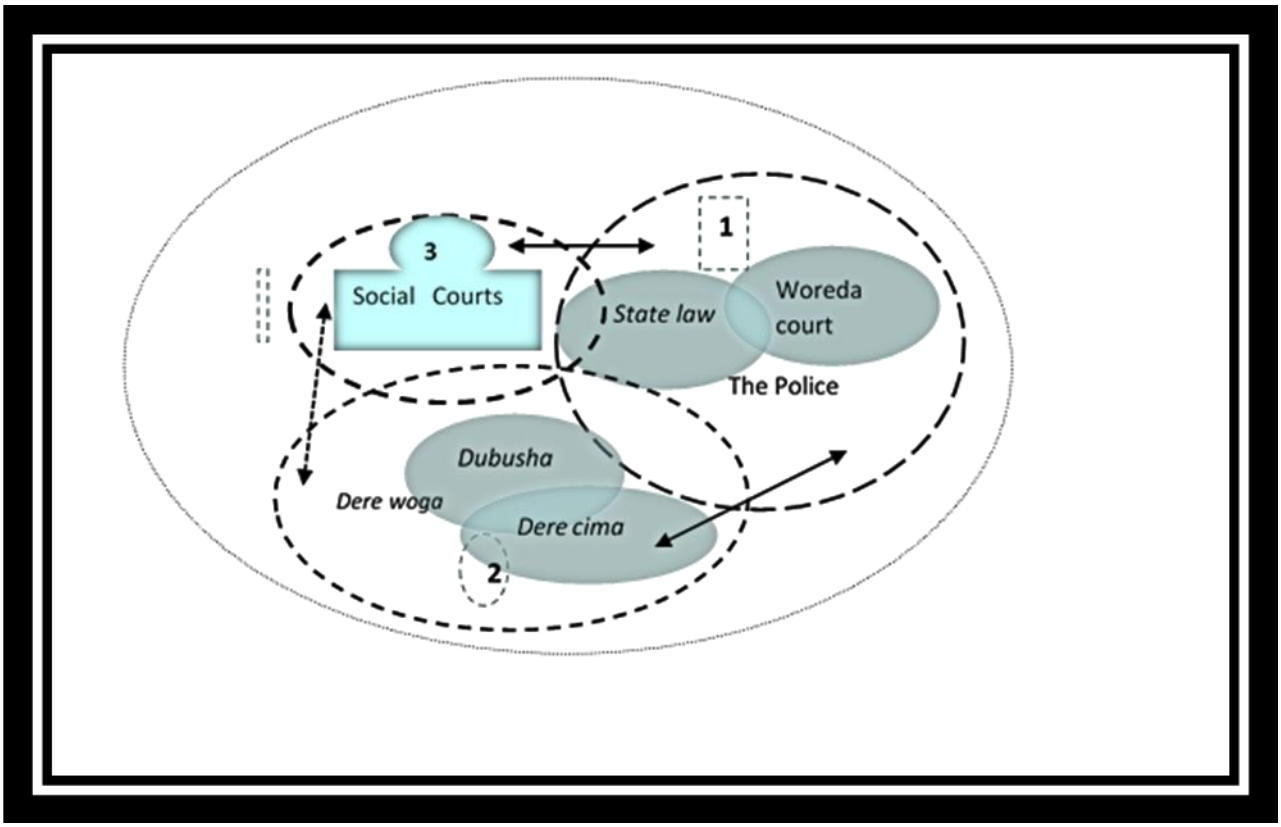
6.5 Legal pluralism: interrelations between customary, religious and state legal systems

Legal pluralism is an important concept in disciplines that study legal issues. It refers to the existence of two or more legal or justice systems in a given society or country. Legal pluralism indicates the co-existence of multiple legal systems working side-by-side in the same society. Legal pluralism is evident in the Ethiopian context. Multiple legal institutions, including customary laws and courts, state laws and courts, and religious laws and courts (e.g., the Sharia Law) work side-by-side in most parts of the country. The FDRE Constitution provides ample space for religious and customary laws and courts to address personal and family cases. The following two Articles show this reality.

- In accordance with provisions to be specified by law, a law giving recognition to marriage concluded under systems of religious or customary laws may be enacted (Article 34(4).
- Religious and customary courts that had state recognition and functioning prior to the adoption of the Constitution shall be organized on the basis of recognition accorded to them by the Constitution. (Article 78(5))

Legal pluralism is a pervasive phenomenon in Ethiopia. This is because a single legal system does not have a capability to address all legal cases and maintaining peace and order.

Hence, the following justice institutions work side-by-side in most parts of the country, especially in remote and rural areas: state/formal justice institutions, customary justice institutions, and religious courts. The following figure shows the formal and customary justice institutions working side-by-side in one of the districts in Gamo zone.



Three elements are portrayed in the figure above: 1) state justice institutions: state law, districts court, and the police; 2) customary institutions: *dere woga*/customary law, *dubusha*/customary court, and *dere cima*/council of elders; and 3) social court attached to each *kebele* administration. The picture will be more complex if we add religious courts such as the Sharia court which is very important in regions such as Afar, Somali, and Harari.

Reflect your views on the following questions

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of legal pluralism (having multiple justice/legal systems/institutions)?
- Do you think that state justice institutions and customary justice institutions support each other to maintain peace and order?

Discuss these and related issues among your classmates.

6.6 Unit Summary

Dear students, this unit discusses issues related to institutions of indigenous/local governance, conflict resolution and peace making. We cannot completely avoid conflicts in the social world. Societies have devised different institutions and mechanisms to control, manage and resolve conflicts in order to maintain peace and social order. In this unit, you have also discussed the role of women and women's institutions in calming quarrelling parties and making peace is also presented and discussed. You will have more discussion on indigenous knowledge systems in the next unit.

6.7 Assessment Techniques:

The assessment methods to be used in this unit include; quiz, group assignment, individual assignments, administering different examinations and mandatory reading assignments.

6.8 Facilities Required:

White/Blackboard, LCD/Power Point Presentations, Whiteboard Markers…. etc.

Suggested Reading Materials

Alula Pankhurst and Getachew Assefa (Eds.). 2008. Grassroots Justice in Ethiopia: The contribution of customary dispute resolution. Addis Ababa: French Center of Ethiopian Studies.

Alula Pankhurst and GetachewAssefa. 2008. Understanding Customary Dispute Resolution in Ethiopia. In Grassroots Justice in Ethiopia edited by Alula Pankhurst and GetachewAssefa.

Dejene Gemechu. 2007. Conflict and conflict resolution among Waliso Oromo of Eastern Macha, the case of the Guma. Addis Ababa University: Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

Gebre Yintso, Fekade Azeze, and Assefa Fiseha (Eds.). 2011. Customary dispute resolution mechanisms in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: The Ethiopian Arbitration and Conciliation Center.

Getaneh Mehari. 2014. Betwixt and Between? Culture and women's rights in the context of multiple legal and institutional settings, the Dorze case, south-western Ethiopia. PhD Dissertation, Addis Ababa University.

Getachew Senishaw. 2014. The Nexus of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge, Livelihood Strategies, and Social Institutions in Midland Gedeo Human-Environment Relations. PHD dissertation, Department of Social Anthropology, Addis Ababa University.

International Institute of Rural Reconciliation (IIRR). 2009. Culture at Crossroads: Ethiopian women in peace-making. Nairobi, Kenya.

Shimeles Gizaw and Taddese Gessese (2008). Customary Dispute Resolution in Tigray Region: Case Studies from Three Districts. In Grassroots Justice in Ethiopia edited by Alula Pankhurst and GetachewAssefa.

Tarekegn Adebo and Hannah Tsadik (Eds.) Making peace in Ethiopia: Five cases of traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution. Addis Ababa: Master Printing Press.

Unit Seven

7. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and Practices

Study Hours: 8 Face to Face Hours

Dear Students!

You have discussed *customary and local governance systems and peacemaking*in Chapter 6. In this chapter, you will discuss issues related to *indigenous knowledge systems and practices*. The chapter discusses who indigenous peoples are and their knowledge; special features of indigenous peoples; significances of indigenous knowledge; indigenous knowledge and development; preservation, challenges and limitations of indigenous knowledge; and the erosion of indigenous knowledge systems. Dear students, as this is modular course, your active participation is of vital importance.

Contents of the Unit:

In this part of this module, we will explore more about indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). The conceptualizations of IKSs starting from definitional concerns to scholarly agreed up on features and the development, significance and preservation of indigenous knowledge will be highlighted.Finally, analysis is made on the challenges associated with the decline and erosion of indigenous knowledge.

Unit Learning Outcomes:

Up on the successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify who indigenous people are, and their knowledge
- Describe the significances of indigenous knowledge
- State the challenges facing indigenous knowledge
- Suggest viable ways of promoting and protecting IK

7.1. Definition of concepts

7.1.1. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

IKS is defined as technical insight of wisdom gained and developed by people in a particular locality through years of careful observation and experimentation with the phenomena around them. IKS is not just a set of information that is in the minds of the people, which can be simply taped and applied. It is accessible by recall and practice (Mangetane, 2001). IKS is embodied in culture and is described as an integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs and behavior. It consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, artifacts, rituals, ceremonies, folklores and gender. This culture is passed down from one generation to the next generation and generally it provides a holistic view of how to use natural resources based on traditional ethical perspectives (Atteh,1991). Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) refer to a body of empirical knowledge and beliefs handed down through generations of long-time inhabitants of a specific locale, by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings with each other and their environment (Warren 1991).

In sum, IKS refers to " a total of knowledge and practices, whether explicit or implicit, used in the management of socioeconomic, ecological and spiritual facets of life (Hoppers, 2005: 2), stored in the collective memory and communicated orally among members of the community and to the future generations [through, stories, myth, songs, etc].

7.1.2. Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous peoples

In international context, while the term 'indigenous' is understood (mostly by Europeans) as being similar or synonym to 'traditional', 'aboriginal', 'vernacular', 'African', 'Black', and 'native American', the phrase 'indigenous people' refers to a specific group of people occupying a certain geographic area for many generations (Loubser, 2005). Indigenous people possess, practice and protect a total sum of knowledge and skills constitutive of their meaning, belief systems, livelihood constructions and expression that distinguish them from other groups (Dondolo, 2005; Nel, 2005).

However, the concept “indigenous” is a social and historical construct with high political, social, and economic stakes. Definitions of indigenous in international governing organizations (IGOs), in indigenous communities, and in the academic literature are highly contested. The World Bank's definition of indigenous peoples includes close attachment to ancestral territories and the natural resources in them; presence of customary social and political institutions; economic systems primarily oriented to subsistence production; an indigenous language, often different from the predominant language; and self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group (The world Bank in Corntassel, 2003:86).

Indigenousness, as defined by indigenous peoples, focuses on the relationship with the community in which they live. In each definition the distinction between the communities is cited. Both definitions also highlight the relationship of indigenous peoples to the power structure within the state, noting that indigenous groups are disadvantaged or lack control. Territory is also essential in the definitions. Being indigenous is about “continuity of habitation, aboriginality, and often a ‘natural’ connection to the land” (Clifford 1997[1994]:287). For example, in the cosmology of Native Hawaiians the land is an ancestor who gave birth to Hawaiians (Trask 1999). Thus, the relationship to the land is a form of kinship. There is a sense of stewardship and of duty to not only use the resources that the land gives for sustenance, but to do what each generation can to perpetuate the health and fertility of the land.

Academic definitions focus on the following elements of indigenous identity**:** living in tradition-based cultures, having political autonomy prior to colonialism, and seeking to preserve cultural integrity in the present (Corntassel, 2003). They also recognize the role of land to indigenous peoples—noting that they are descended from inhabitants of the land they occupy (ibid).

In 1986, however, a working definition of Indigenous peoples was offered by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Issues, developed within the comprehensive *Study by Martinez Cobo J.* on *the problem of discrimination against indigenous populations.* According to this definition:

> Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems (*Martinez*Cobo, 1982).

In sum, despite the lack of an authoritative / formal universal definition for the concept of indigenous peoples, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) sets outs distinguishing features as a guide for the identification of indigenous peoples across the globe. This includes the**:**

- Self- identification as Indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member;
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies;
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources;
- Distinct social, economic or political systems;
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs;
- Formation of non-dominant groups of society; and
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities (UNPFII, n.d. Available from: https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf.).

Regarding their number, it is estimated that there are approximately 370 million indigenous peoples live in some 90 countries across the world (Bartlett, 2007). While they constitute 5 per cent of the world's population, they make up 15 per cent of the world's disadvantaged. Of the 7,000 languages in the world today, it is estimated that more than 4,000 are spoken by the indigenous peoples (Edmund Jan Osmanczyk ed., 1990). Practicing their respective unique traditions, indigenous people retain social, cultural, economic and political characteristics which are distinct and different from those of the larger societies in which they live (Bahar , 2010).

Spread across the world from the Arctic to the South Pacific, they are the descendants -- of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived. The new arrivals later became dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement or other means (UNPFII fact sheet, n.d.).

Reflect on the following questions

- Can you list some of the distinguishing features Indigenous peoples?
- Where and how do you think IK is stored and transmitted from one generation to the next?
- How do the term 'indigenous' is understood by the western world?

Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

Literatures on indigenous knowledge does not provide a single definition of the concept. This is in part due to the differences in background and perspectives of the authors, ranging from social anthropology to agricultural engineering

According to Warren, indigenous knowledge is the local knowledge – knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. Since every population is unique in terms of its environment, its resources, and its tools (both physical and conceptual), IK will also be unique. IK contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms. It is the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities .

(Warren, 1991)**.** For Kwaku and Morena (2010), IK is a unique local knowledge to a given culture or society. IK exists in rural and urban societies as part of life that their livelihood depends on specific skills and knowledge for survival.

The World Bank refers IK as a large body of knowledge and skills which is developed outside the formal system including development planning, environmental assessment, resource management, local conservation of biological resources, and conflict resolution (World Bank, 1998).

IK has different but closely related names such as 'folk knowledge', 'local knowledge or wisdom', 'non-formal knowledge', 'culture', 'indigenous technical knowledge', 'traditional ecological knowledge', 'traditional knowledge', and others. All these terms have similar concepts and refer to how members of a community perceive and understand their environment and resources, particularly the way they convert those resources through labor(Akabogu, 2002).

In sum, indigenous knowledge is the knowledge that people in a given community have developed over time, and that continues to develop. It is based on experience, often tested over centuries of use, adapted to local culture and environment, dynamic and changing (International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, IIRR, 1996).

Reflect on the following questions

- Who are indigenous people?

  What is indigenous Knowledge?

7.1.3. Special Features of Indigenous Knowledge

Ellen and Harris (1996) identified the following special features of indigenous knowledge that distinguish it broadly from other knowledge. As to them IK is**:**

1. L**ocal**, in that it is rooted in a particular community and situated within broader cultural traditions; it is a set of experiences generated by people living in those communities. Separating the technical from the non-technical, the rational from the non-rational could be problematic. Therefore, when transferred to other places, there is a potential risk of dislocating IK.
2. T**acit** knowledge and, therefore, not easily codifiable.
3. T**ransmitted orally**, or through imitation and demonstration. Codifying it may lead to the loss of some of its properties.

4. E**xperiential rather than theoretical knowledge**. Experience and trial and error, tested in the rigorous laboratory of survival of local communities constantly reinforce IK.

5. L**earned through repetition**, which is a defining characteristic of tradition even when new knowledge is added. Repetition aids in the retention and reinforcement of IK.

6. C**onstantly changing**, being produced as well as reproduced, discovered as well as lost; though it is often perceived by external observers as being somewhat static

Reflect on the following questions

- Can you list some of the distinguishing features Indigenous peoples?
- Where and how do to you think IK is stored and transmitted from one generation to the next?

7.2 Significance of indigenous knowledge

Until relatively recently, the development of a community's conception of knowledge was influenced primarily by the philosophy and methods of western science. "Few, outside of some anthropologists and historians recognized that there are numerous sciences embedded in cultures of other peoples and civilizations throughout the world (Davies, S. and Ebbe, K., editors, 1995).

Today, however, both scholars and public policy makers are recognizing the importance of various local or culture-based knowledge systems in addressing the pressing problems of development and the environment" (ibid).

Indigenous knowledge is important in that people in a community value whatever resource they get from the environment through sustainable production systems. These communities are conscious of the need to self-reliant in capital stocks and management skills (Mangetane et al, 2001).

The knowledge of local people is an enabling component of development. In this regard; a large percentage of the earth's genetic diversity has been maintained and managed through farmer's IKS (Dewes,1993).

Indigenous knowledge system enable people to develop strategies for handling household and communal activities (Mangetane et al., 2001). For example in Ethiopia *Debo* and *Jige* are an important uniting forces in communal activities. Members of the community unite to provide essential inputs, including direct labor to operations. ''This deployment of manpower is strongly supported by IKS, which is composed of technologies, rules, information, approaches, and relationships that are vital to sustainable development'' (Kalawole, 2001).

Over the years, IKS authorities (elders) make local rules to protect important resources such as useful plants, water bodies, stone terracing, agro-forestry, watersheds and rivers, food preservations, conflict management, calendar, fallowing as a soil regeneration practice, etc. According to Paula Puffer Paula (1995), indigenous / local knowledge can help find the best solution to a development challenges. For example, familiarity with local knowledge can help extensionists and researchers understand and communicate better with local people.

In general, indigenous knowledge is an important part of the lives of the poor. IK is a key element of the “social capital” of the poor; their main asset to invest in the struggle for survival, to produce food, to provide for shelter or to achieve control of their own lives. Furthermore, one cannot overlook indigenous knowledge’s ability to provide effective alternatives to Western know-how. IK offers local people and their development workers further options in designing new projects or addressing specific problems and wider disasters. Instead of relying on imported Western technologies, people in the developing nations can choose from readily available indigenous knowledge or, where appropriate, combine indigenous and Western technology.

However, it is important to note that not all indigenous practices are beneficial to the sustainable development of a local community; and not all IK can *a priori* provide the right solution for a given problem. Typical examples are slash and burn agriculture and female circumcision**.** Hence, before adopting IK, integrating it into development programs, or even disseminating it, practices need to be scrutinized for their appropriateness just as any other technology. (A frame work for action, 1998).

Reflect on the following questions

- Why do we study indigenous knowledge?
- Do you think indigenous knowledge is an important part of the lives of the indigenous people? How?

7.3. Indigenous knowledge and development

Needless to mention again, indigenous knowledge refers to what indigenous people know and do, and what they have known and done for generations – practices that evolved through trial and error and proved flexible enough to cope with change (Melchias, 2001).

Indigenous knowledge passes from one generation to the next and enable indigenous people to survive, manage their natural resources and the ecosystems surrounding them like animals, plants, rivers, seas, natural environment, economic, cultural and political organization**.** Knowledge of these elements form a set of interacting units known as indigenous coping systems. In other words, ''IK is relevant to development process such as agriculture, animal husbandry, traditional medicine, saving and credit, community development, poverty alleviation, and peaceful coexistence'' (Boven and Morohashi, 2002).

Indigenous knowledge may help identify cost-effective and sustainable mechanisms for poverty alleviation that are locally manageable and meaningful. It increases and enhances livelihood options, revitalize agriculture, increase food security, improve health and promote a sense of cultural pride within the community (Kudzayi et al, 2013). Many plants currently growing wild in the ancestral domain produce natural dye, fiber, detergent and natural oil. Several plants in the ancestral domain have medicinal uses. Chemical compounds of these plants could be identified for the production of organic medicine (ibid).''Indigenous knowledge is used at the local level by communities as the basis for decisions pertaining to food security, human and animal health, education, natural resources management, and other vital activities'' (Nicolas, 2000).

Nicolas further states that indigenous institutions, indigenous technology, and low-cost approaches can increase the efficiency of development programs because IK is a locally owned and managed resource. Utilizing IK helps to increase the sustainability of development efforts because the IK integration process provides for mutual learning and adaptation, which in turn contributes to the empowerment of local communities.

Since efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability are key determinants of the quality of development work, harnessing indigenous knowledge has a clear development business case. Early indications point to significant improvements in development project quality, if IK is leveraged with modern technologies. Building on IK systems also empowers local communities. Empowerment, especially of the poor, is a core objective of most development efforts(ibid).

According to the 1998/99 World Development Report, knowledge, not capital, is the key to sustainable social and economic development. Building on local knowledge, the basic component of any country's knowledge system, is the first step to mobilize such capital.

As to the same report, the challenge for the development community is to find better ways to learn about indigenous institutions and practices and where necessary adapt modern techniques (i.e., "global best practices") to the local practices. Only then will global knowledge be rendered relevant to the local community needs. The key factor in the adaptation process is the involvement of those who possess indigenous knowledge. A study of 121 rural water projects in 49 countries found that 70 percent succeeded when the intended beneficiaries participated in project design, compared to a 10 percent success rate among programs where they did not.[7]

In sum, indigenous knowledge is the knowledge that helps a society make decisions about activities, such as agriculture and education, that are acceptable to their life ways. Indigenous knowledge, along with western- based knowledge, helps create development solutions that are culturally acceptable by the community. In the past, such knowledge has been ignored and development solutions have been created that were not economically feasible or culturally acceptable by the local community. When western scientific ideas are

[7]1998/99 World development Report: Knowledge for Development.

paired with indigenous knowledge systems, researchers going overseas or working with local communities can prepare an initial development plan that has a complete picture (Puffer, 1995).

Reflect on the following questions

Can you list some of the major features of IK?

List the different but closely related names of IK.

7.4. Preservation, Challenges and Limitations of IK

Indigenous knowledge, which has generally been passed from generation to generation by word of mouth, is in danger of being lost unless it is formally documented and preserved (Amare, 2009). The future of IK, that reflects many generations of experience and problem solving by thousands of indigenous people across the globe, is uncertain (Warren, 2004).

The loss of IK would impoverish society because, just as the world needs genetic diversity of species, it needs diversity of knowledge systems (Labelle, 1997). The rapid change in the way of life of local communities has largely accounted for the loss of IK. Younger generations underestimate the utility of IK systems because of the influence of modem technology and education (Ulluwishewa, 1999).

If IK is not recorded and preserved, it may be lost and remain inaccessible to other indigenous systems as well as to development workers. Development projects cannot offer sustainable solutions to local problems without integrating local knowledge (Warren, 1991).

"Since IK is essential to development, it must be gathered, organized and disseminated, just like Western knowledge''(Agrawal, 1995 in Amare, 2009). As IK is the key to local-level development, ignoring people’s knowledge leads possibly to failure. Similarly, ''one should not expect all the expertise for third world development to come from developed nations, academic institutions, multinational corporations or NGOs'' (Amare, 2009). In the face of dwindling resources available to African countries, and noting that even the industrialized

nation governments cannot provide for all the needs of the people, it has been suggested that IK, and the technical expertise developed there from become vital tools for rural development(Atte, 1989).

Regarding the challenges and limitations of IK, Amare (2009) states the following :

> Although the knowledge of indigenous communities has been found to be very useful, the, exploitation of natural resources, and increased competition for employment, has set off a problematic chain of events. This modernization has influenced indigenous traditional spread of industrialization threatens the preservation and continued development of IK systems (Sherpa, 2005). Industrialization, along with its attendant processes of urbanization African which generate IK and practices can break down. Added to this is the commercial society in many ways and Ethiopia is no exception.
>
> IK can also be eroded by wider economic and social forces. Pressure on indigenous peoples to integrate with larger societies is often great and, as they become more integrated, the social structures pressure by multinational agrochemical companies eager to break into new markets (Thrupp, 1989). As Grenier (1998) puts it: "the growth of national and international markets, the imposition o f educational and religious systems and the impact o f various development processes are leading more and more to the "homogenization" o f the world's cultures. Consequently, indigenous beliefs, values, customs, know-how and practices may be altered and the resulting knowledge base incomplete.

As with scientific knowledge, (Amare, 2009), IK has the following limitations and drawbacks and these must be recognized as well**:**

> IK is sometimes accepted uncritically because of naive notions that whatever indigenous people do is naturally in harmony with the environment. Thrupp (1989) argues that we should reject "romanticized and idealistic views of local knowledge and traditional societies". There is historical and contemporary evidence that indigenous peoples have also committed environmental sins' through over-grazing, over-hunting, or over-cultivation of the land. It is misleading to think of IK as always being 'good', 'right or 'sustainable'.
>
> Quite often the overlooked feature of IK, which needs to be taken into account, is that, like scientific knowledge, sometimes the knowledge which local people rely on is wrong or even harmful. Practices based on, for example, mistaken beliefs, faulty experimentation, or

inaccurate information can be dangerous and may even be a barrier to improving the wellbeing of indigenous people.

Doubleday (2003) pointed out that knowledge is power, so individuals are not always willing to share knowledge among themselves, or with outsiders. Knowledge is a source of status and income (as is the case, for example, with a herbalist) and is often jealously guarded. A related issue is that some indigenous peoples fear that their IK will be misused, and lacking the power to prevent such abuses, they choose to keep quiet.

Reflect your views on the following questions

How can we preserve IK?

Why IK is considered as an important part of the lives of the indigenous peoples?

Do you think as with scientific knowledge, IK has limitations? How?

7.5. The Erosion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems(IKS)

Despite the fact that some IK is lost naturally as techniques and tools are modified or fall out of use, the recent and current rate of loss is accelerating because of rapid population growth, growth of international markets, educational systems, environmental degradation, and development processes — pressures related to rapid modernization and cultural homogenization (Louise Grenier, 1998). Below, some examples are given by Grenier to illustrate these mechanisms:

- With rapid population growth—often due to in-migration or government relocation schemes in the case of large development projects, such as dams — standards of living may be compromised. With poverty, opportunities for short-term gain are selected over environmentally sound local practices. With increasing levels of poverty, farmers, for example, may also have less time and fewer resources to sustain the dynamic nature of IK systems through their local experiments and innovations.
- The introduction of market-oriented agricultural and forestry practices focused on mono-cropping is associated with losses in IK and IK practices, through losses in biodiversity and cultural diversity. For instance, policies promoting generic rice and wheat varieties devalue

locally adapted species. With the ready availability of many commercial foods, some biodiversity *seems* to become less relevant, such as seed and crop varieties selected over the years for their long-term storage attributes.

- In the short term, chemical inputs *seem* to reduce the need to tailor varieties to difficult growing conditions, contributing to the demise of local varieties.
- With deforestation, certain medicinal plants become more difficult to find (and the knowledge or culture associated with the plants also declines).
- More and more knowledge is being lost as a result of the disruption of traditional channels of oral communication. Neither children nor adults spend as much time in their communities anymore (for example, some people travel to the city on a daily basis to go to school, to look for work, or to sell farm produce; many young people are no longer interested in, or do not have the opportunity for, learning traditional methods). It is harder for the older generation to transmit their knowledge to young people.
- As IK is transmitted orally, it is vulnerable to rapid change — especially when people are displaced or when young people acquire values and lifestyles different from those of their ancestors.
- Farmers traditionally maintained their indigenous crop varieties by keeping household seed stocks and by obtaining seed through traditional family and community networks and through exchanges with nearby communities. Some of these traditional networks have been disrupted or no longer exist.
- In the past, outsiders (for example, social, physical, and agricultural scientists, biologists, colonial powers) ignored or maligned IK, depicting it as primitive, simple, static, "not knowledge," or folklore. This historic neglect (regardless of its cause — racism, ethnocentrism, or modernism, with its complete faith in the scientific method) has contributed to the decline of IK systems, through lack of use and application. This legacy is still continued, as a result of which many professionals are still skeptical (Louise Grenier, 1998).

Also, in some countries, official propaganda depicts indigenous cultures and methodologies as backward or out of date and simultaneously promotes one national culture and one language at the expense of minority cultures. Often, formal schooling reinforces this negative attitude. Local people's perceptions (or misperceptions) of local species and of their own traditional systems may need to be rebuilt. Some local people and communities

have lost confidence in their ability to help themselves and have become dependent on external solutions to their local problems (ibid).

In sum, indigenous peoples often have much in common with other neglected segments of societies, i.e. lack of political representation and participation, economic marginalization and poverty, lack of access to social services and discrimination. Despite their cultural differences, the diverse indigenous peoples share common problems also related to the protection of their rights.

Reflect on the following summary questions

What are the factors that contribute to the loss of IK?

- Why do the recent and current rate of loss of IK is accelerating?
- Why do we preserve IK?
- Do you think all indigenous practices are beneficial to the sustainable development of a local community? How?

7.6. Unit summary

Dear Students!

In this unit we have addressed the most important concepts, aspects and dimensions of indigenous knowledge as system of knowledge. We have seen that Indigenous knowledge is defined as technical insight of wisdom gained and developed by people in a particular locality through years of careful observation and experimentation with the phenomena around them. IKS is embodied in culture and is described as an integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs and behavior. the concept “indigenous” is a social and historical construct with high political, social, and economic stakes… indigenous is about pre-invasion, pre-colonial continuity of habitation, aboriginality, and often a ‘natural’ connection to the land. IK as a large body of knowledge and skills which is developed outside the formal system including development planning, environmental assessment, resource management,

local conservation of biological resources, and conflict resolution characterized usually by being locally distributed and owned by communities (groups or individuals) as a tacit, repetitive, oral, usually practical and experiential and always in some form of flux. The significance of IK has been being recognized by development actors and practitioners of sustainable development across all levels. Hence, since IK is essential to development, it must be preserved as in being gathered, recorded, organized and disseminated knowledge. Recently, however, IK is facing real multifaceted challenges related to modernization schemes and cultural homogenization attempts including but not exclusively of fast-tracked population growth, economic and market globalization, advances in educational systems, environmental degradation, and top-down development plans and programs.

7.7. **Assessment Techniques:**

The assessment methods to be used in this unit include; quiz, group assignment, individual assignments, administering different examinations and mandatory reading assignments.

7.8. **Facilities Required:**

White/Blackboard, LCD/Power Point Presentations, Whiteboard Markers …. etc.

Suggested Reading Materials

Agrawal, A. (1995) Dismantling the divide between indigenous and scientific knowledge. *Development and Change* 26(3): 413-39.

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